

KOGARATSU

THE ETAS'
TREASURE



REPÉRAGES
DUPUIS

• Geographic Distribution

Geographic distribution is the range of locations where a species occurs naturally. Geographic distribution can be described at different levels:

- **Local**: Within a limited area.
- **National**: Within a country.
- **Regional**: Within a region.
- **Global**: Worldwide.

• Global Distribution

Global distribution is the range of locations where a species occurs naturally worldwide. Global distribution can be described at different levels:

• **Widespread**: Found in many countries or regions.

KODAK SAFETY FILM

THE SAFEST
TRANSMISSION



KODAK SAFETY FILM
THE SAFEST TRANSMISSION

KODAK SAFETY FILM

...LORD, HERE IS ALL THAT WE KNOW ABOUT YEMITSU'S SERVITORS AND WHAT OUR SPIES HAVE REPORTED ON THE BLOOD LOTUS CASE!

SO MY NEPHEW BANDO IS ALIVE AND FREE OUTSIDE OF OUR FRONTIERS...

ALAS MY LORD... WE CHASED THEM UP TO AMATERTSU'S DOOR BUT THEY ESCAPED AND...

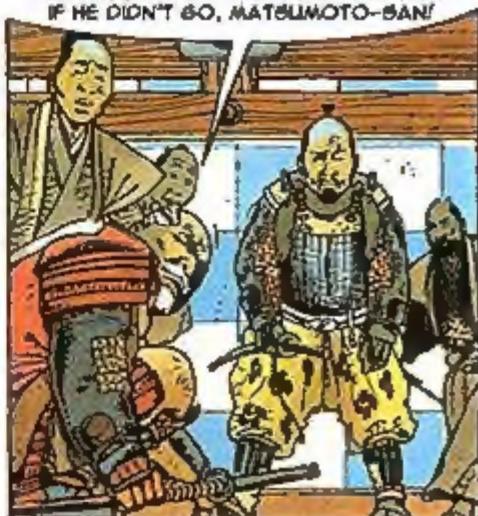
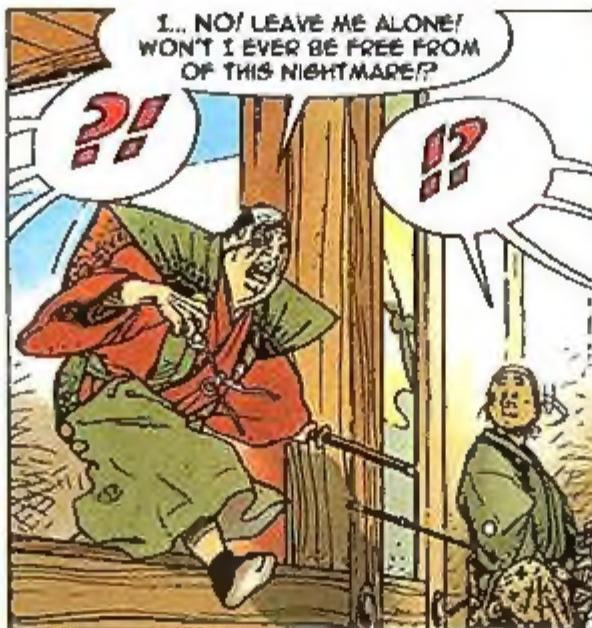
ENOUGH! YOU'RE USELESS!



BANDO IS ALIVE AND FREE!
ALIVE AND FREE!

...NO! LEAVE ME ALONE!
WON'T I EVER BE FREE FROM
OF THIS NIGHTMARE?

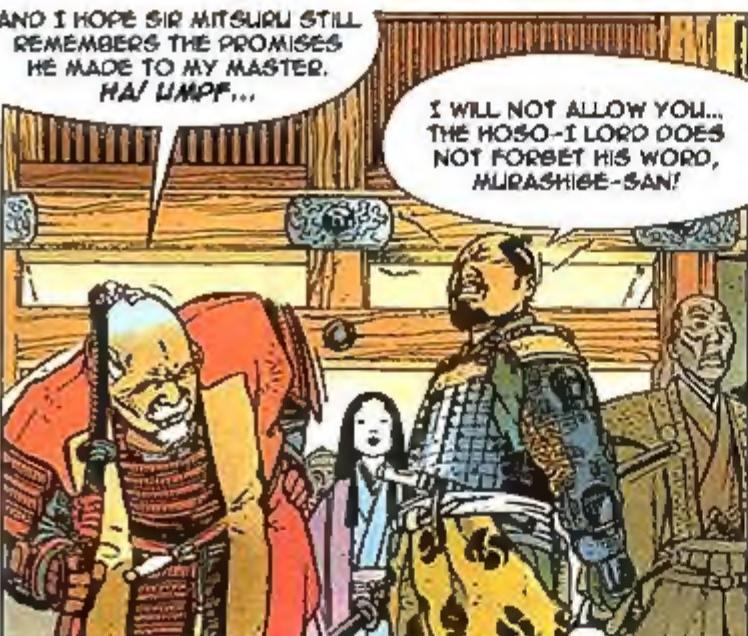
HMM! SIR MITSURU SEEMS REALLY ILL, NE? IT WOULD BE MORE SUITABLE IF HE WERE IN GOOD ENOUGH HEALTH TO WELCOME FATHER ORTEZA AT THE FRONTIER. MY MASTER, THE SHOGUN, WOULD BE VERY DISPLEASED IF HE DIDN'T GO, MATSUMOTO-SAN!



AND I HOPE SIR MITSURU STILL REMEMBERS THE PROMISES HE MADE TO MY MASTER.
HA! UMPF...

I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU...
THE HOSO-I LORD DOES NOT FORGET HIS WORD,
MURASHIGE-SAN!

MURASHIGE-SAN!
ARE YOU LISTENING
TO ME?



MY MASTER WILL BECOME CHRISTIAN TO PLEASE THE SHOGUN!

...THEN HE WILL MARRY LADY ISHI TO BECOME HIS NEPHEW AND ALLY.

SIR MITSURU HOPES THAT, ONCE HE BECOMES CHRISTIAN THE SHOGUN AND THE BARBARIANS FROM THE SOUTH WILL REMEMBER THEIR WORDS AND DELIVER THE RIFLES AS PROMISED!

HMM? ...YES ...YES! THE RIFLES, OF COURSE...

I SEE YOUR MASTER IS ADOPTING CHRISTIANITY BECAUSE OF NOBLE REASONS, MATSUMOTO-SAN!

HO!

HAD HAD HAD MATSUMOTO-SAN IS A GREAT WARRIOR BUT HE IS A WRETCHED POLITICIAN, ISN'T HE, LADY ISHI?

BUT... YOU'RE CRYING?!

OF COURSE... I UNDERSTAND! THERE'S NOTHING ENVIALE IN MARRYING A MAN SUCH AS SIR MITSURU... ALAS, IT IS THE BURDEN OF THE BREATHS TO BEND TO THE WILL OF HISTORY, NE?

THERE ARE TIMES... THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I'D RATHER BE THE POOREST FARMER! THEN I WOULD NOT FEEL ASHAMED, WHEN I LOOK AT MYSELF IN A MIRROR!

DURING THAT TIME, THE MOSO-I LORD TOOK REFUGE IN HIS BEDROOM.

B... BANDO IS ALIVE... AND... AND... AND HE MUST HATE ME! ME, WHO HAS DONE SO MUCH FOR THIS COUNTRY!

LORDY HIIIIIIH...
I BEG YOU...
CALM DOWN! HIIIIIIH...

I WILL HAVE TO TELL HIM...
I'M NOT BAD, AFTER ALL!
IF MOTHER WAS STILL HERE,
SHE WOULD TELL HIM...



I AM HERE,
MITSURU-SAN!

MOTHER! ...YOU CAME BACK, HOHO,
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! YOU TOO FATHER!
YOU ARE BACK AMONGST THE LIVING!!
HOHO...



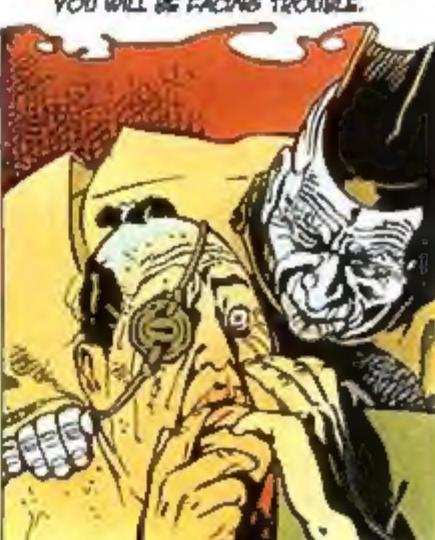
MOTHER, IT IS TRUE I'VE HAD MY BROTHER YOSHIDA ASSASSINATED! ...BUT YOU WILL TALK WITH BANDO... HE HAS TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE ONLY THING I WANTED WHEN I KILLED HIS FATHER WAS TO REUNIFY YOUR ESTATE!

I... I SWEAR I DIDN'T WANT HIM DEAD,
FATHER. I SWEAAAAR! I ONLY WANTED...
OUR ESTATE BACK!

—IN THESE KIND OF AFFAIRS, MY SON,
YOU HAVE TO KILL EVERYBODY.
FROM THE LEADER OF THE CLAN TO
THE SMALLEST SAMURAI! IF YOU DON'T,
YOU WILL BE FACING TROUBLE.

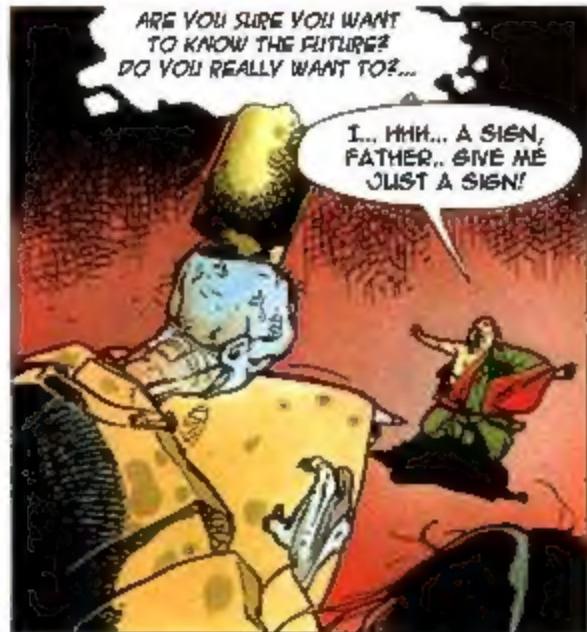
LOOK AT HIM, ROJIN!
HE IS THE SAME AS WHEN
HE WAS LITTLE, WHEN
HIS BROTHER BULLIED HIM...

COME ON, MY SON.
YOU'RE A BIG BOY NOW!
AT YOUR AGE, THERE'S SOMETHING
YOU SHOULD KNOW...





MITSURU-SAN! THE RICE THAT SPROUTS TODAY IS THE ONE THAT WAS PLANTED YESTERDAY! IT IS THEREFORE NOT SURPRISING THAT THE BLADE YOU PLANTED IN YOUR BROTHER'S HEART HAS SPROUTED LIKE A TREE OF HATE. NOW IT IS DARKENING THE FUTURE...



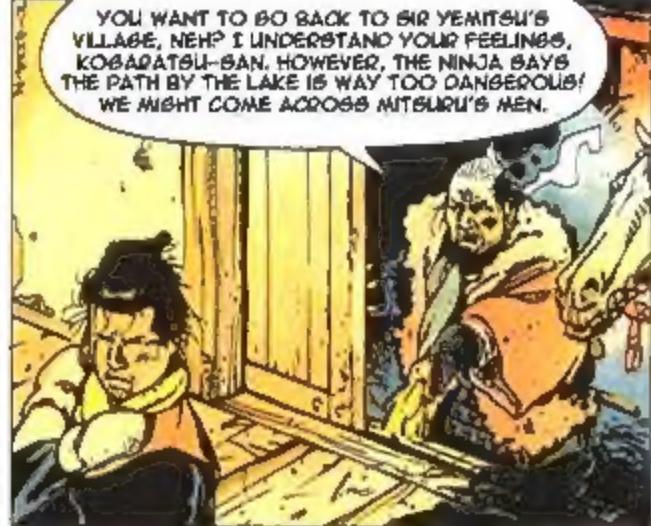
WINTER 1610-1611. FRONTIER POST OF THE HOSO-I PROVINCE, HOKKAIDO ISLAND.



INSIDE A HOUSE LOST IN THE STORM, A DIFFERENT KIND OF TEMPEST IS TAKING PLACE...

I AGREE WITH YOU, MISHITO-SAN, THE MISSION OUR MASTER ENTRUSTED WITH US IS MORE IMPORTANT... BUT WHAT DIFFERENCE IS THERE BETWEEN TAKING THE ROAD BY THE RIDGES OR SHIKAKU LAKE?

YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO SIR YENITSU'S VILLAGE, NEH? I UNDERSTAND YOUR FEELINGS, KOBARATSU-SAN. HOWEVER, THE NINJA SAYS THE PATH BY THE LAKE IS WAY TOO DANGEROUS! WE MIGHT COME ACROSS MITSURU'S MEN.



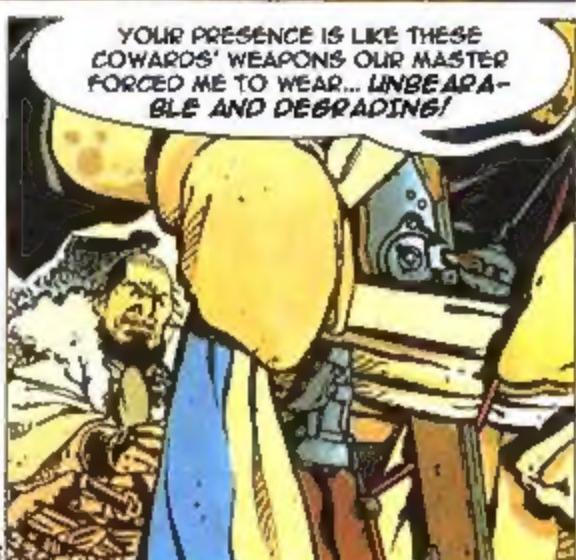
THE NINJA SAYS... THE NINJA SAYS... WHATEVER A NINJA SAYS! AREN'T THOSE KILLERS KNOWN FOR THEIR PERIFIDIOUSNESS AND LACK OF LOYALTY?

IT IS NOT UP TO ME TO JUDGE SIR GANDO'S ACTIONS BUT WHAT WAS HE THINKING ABOUT WHEN HE HAD THIS KILLER GO WITH US? IS HE PUTTING MORE TRUST IN A MERCENARY THAN INTO HIS OWN SAMURAI'S?



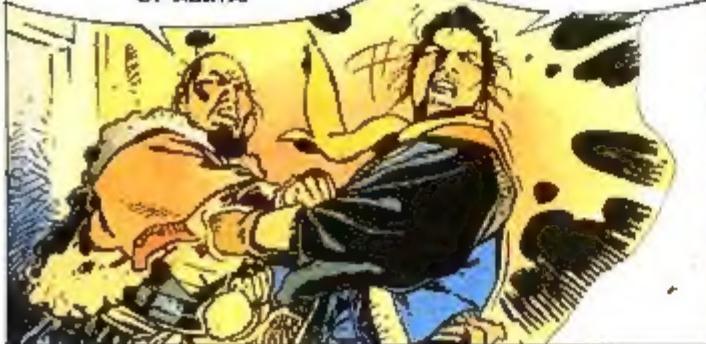
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR INSULTS, NINJA! IF I WASN'T BOUND BY MY MISSION, I'D HAVE CUT YOUR HEAD OFF A LONG TIME AGO!

YOUR PRESENCE IS LIKE THESE COWARDS' WEAPONS OUR MASTER FORCED ME TO WEAR... UNBEARABLE AND DEGRADING!



KOSARATSU-SAN, OUR MASTER JUST WANTED US TO HAVE MORE CARDS UP OUR SLEEVES... TO FIND THAT MAN THAT MUST LEAD US TO TO THE COAST, NEAR THE VILLAGE OF ABUTA.

I KNOW THAT, MISHIMOTO-SAN, BUT THIS... NINJA DOG WANTING TO COMMAND US... IT'S MORE THAN I CAN BEAR!



ALL NIGHT LONG, KOGARATSU AND MISHIMOTO STRUGGLE AGAINST THE STORM, BY DAWN, THEY ARE APPROACHING SIR YEMITSU'S ESTATE...

LOOK, MISHIMOTO-SAN, SHIKATSU LAKE! WE'RE CLOSE TO IT NOW...

YOU'RE RIGHT, KOGARATSU-SAN! BUT WE CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER! OUR HORSES ARE FROZEN!

THEY WERE TOO VISIBLE ANYWAY, BETTER SET RID OF THEM...

WE WILL LEAVE THEM WITH A PEASANT FROM THE YASHIKI! THERE MUST STILL BE SOME PEOPLE LIVING THERE, NE?

MY MASTER IS SAID TO HAVE DIED ON THIS BRIDGE WHILE HE WAS COVERING OUR ESCAPE! I HOPE SOMEONE FROM THE VILLAGE WILL BE ABLE TO TELL US WHAT REALLY HAPPENED!

HMM... LOOK, THERE'S BEEN A BATTLE HERE.

HMM...

I AM AFRAID, KOGARATSU-SAN, THAT THOSE WHO STAYED HERE WON'T BE ABLE TO TELL US ANYTHING...

WEEK!





KOBARATSU-SAN!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE
THAT DOG MITSURU'S
MEN! FORSIVE MY STU-
PIDITY, BUT EVER SINCE
THEY BURNED DOWN THE
VILLAGE, THEIR PATROLS
HAVE INCREASED IN THE
VALLEY... HEHE...

AND YOU, HAKUSHI. FAITHFUL TO OUR LATE
LORD, SIR YOSHIDA, YOU ATTACK ISOLATED
PEOPLE! IS IT BY FAITH AND COURAGE OR IS
IT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO KILL AND
STEAL FROM PEOPLE?

HEHE... ONE MUST LIVE, LORD... AND
NOBODY PROTECTS THE SURVIVORS
WHO TOOK REFUGE IN THE MOUNTAIN
ANYMORE... HA, IF ONLY SIR YEMITSU
WAS STILL HERE TO GUIDE US! HEHE...



ALAS, NOW THAT HE IS
ONLY 6000 FOR
DEFENDING THE DOOR
OF HIS YASHIKI!
HEHEHE...

WHAT? WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?

COME MY LORD! COME, HEHE...
COME! YOU'LL UNDERSTAND.
HEHEHE!



MISHITO-SAN!
HAKUSHI! HELP ME!
YOU CAN'T JUST
LEAVE HIM LIKE THAT!
...MY POOR MASTER...

MASTER!



I'M AFRAID THE INSULT DONE TO YOUR
MASTER IS MUCH MORE SERIOUS THAN
YOU FIRST THOUGHT, MY FRIEND!

HIS HEAD!
THOSE PIGS TOOK
HIS HEAD!

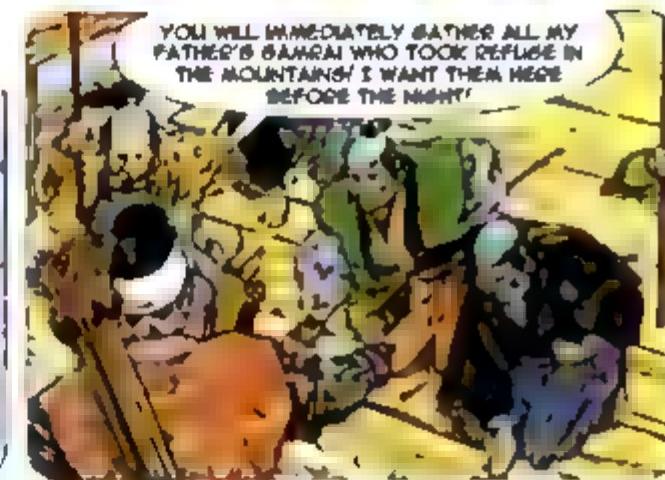
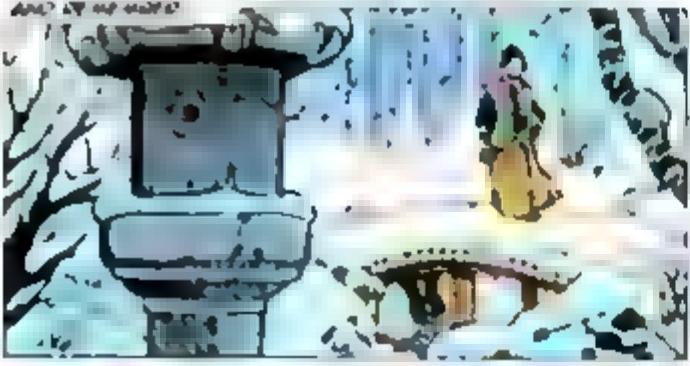


HEHE! IT'S THE CHIEF OF MITSURU'S SAMU-
RAIS, SIR MATSUMOTO, WHO BEHEADED HIM!
HE TOOK THE HEAD AS AN OFFERING
TO HIS MASTER!



WHO KNOWS YOU CAN NEVER COME BOUTURE TO THEM
AND IT IS HARD

HE SEES HIMSELF RIDING WITH ASHIMITO, BEHIND THEIR LORD
KISHIJI BANDO, WHILE FAR BEHIND THEM, IN THE VALLEY, YEMITSU
HAS DIED TRYING TO COVER THEM DEFEAT



FOR A LONG TIME, THEY WAITED INSIDE SHARA BENSO'S HOUSE. THE LORD OF THE VILLAGE, WITHOUT SIR BANDO UTTERING A WORD...

LORD... I DON'T UNDERSTAND. THANKS TO WHAT MIRACLE ARE YOU HERE, TONIGHT?

BENSO-SAN, SIR BANDO WILL ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS WHEN THE OTHER LORDS OF THE MOUNTAINS ARE HERE.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT ANY LONGER, BENSO-SAN! HERE WE ARE... WHERE IS THE ONE PRETENDING TO BE OUR MASTER'S SON?

KAKEI-SAN! IF I WEREN'T IMPUTING YOUR INSULTING BEHAVIOUR TO INCREDOILITY, I WOULD ALREADY HAVE CUT YOUR HEAD OFF!!

BY ANNOA... HE REALLY IS YOSHIDA'S SON!

INDEED, WHEN MY MURDEROUS UNCLE, SIR MITSURU, TOOK THE POWER IN OUR PROVINCE, YOU DECIDED THAT YOUR PREFERRED TO HIDE IN THESE MOUNTAINS INSTEAD OF SWEARING ALLEGIANCE TO HIM. HONEST TO THE SPIRIT OF MY FATHER! BUT YOU HAVE ALSO BEEN KEPT AWAY FROM THE COURT OF ISHIKARI FOR TOO LONG. YOU, WHO USED TO BE SAMURAI HAVE TURNED INTO PEASANTS OR THIEVES!

BUT FEAR NOT. EVERYTHING WILL TURN BACK AS IT WAS! WHEN, WITH A POWERFUL ARMY, WE REMOVE THAT MITSURU TRAITOR FROM THE KISHIJI THRONE, YOU WILL ONCE AGAIN RECEIVE THE HONOURS DUE TO YOUR RANK!

ATTACK THE ISHIKARI SHIRO? YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS MY LORD?

LORD BANDO! DO NOT DOUBT THE FACT THAT OUR LIVES BELONG TO YOU! BUT WE ARE POOR AND OUR BUSHIS ARE POORLY EQUIPPED AND LACK TRAINING. TO GO TO WAR AGAINST MITSURU WOULD BE SUICIDE!

THERE IS NO NEED TO BE UNCERTAIN, FUJITA-SAN! MY FATHER, IN HIS GREAT BENEVOLENCE, BEQUEATHED ME A MAJOR TRUMP CARD TO WIN THIS WAR... AN INVALLABLE TRUMP CARD!

THE ETA'S TREASURE!!

AS SOON AS OUR FIDEL SAMURAI'S HAVE REGAINED THEIR FORCES AND HEALED THEIR WOUNDS I WILL SEND THEM TO A SECRET SPOT ON THE COAST TO BET THIS TREASURE BACK. WE WILL WAIT FOR THEM AND PREPARE OUR ATTACK PLANS.

BUT BEFORE ANYTHING, KAKEI-SAN, TONIGHT I WILL COME WITH YOU TO YOUR VILLAGE. YOUR ARMOURERS ARE FAMOUS AND WITH THIS DANGEROUS MISSION, MY BUSHIS WILL NEED THE BEST WEAPONS.

...YOU WILL WAIT FOR ME AT THE LOCAL INN! KOSARATSUBU-SAN. HAVE YOUR SHOULDER HEALED! AND DON'T DO ANYTHING STUPID DURING MY ABSENCE, WE ARE ON FRIENDLY TERRITORY!

YOU WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED, MY LORD!

YES MY LORD!

IN THE TWILIGHT, THE TWO SAMURAI'S A BIT WORRIED, WATCHED THEIR MASTER DEPART...

COME ON MY FRIEND, LET'S BOTH SEE WHAT THIS INN LOOKS LIKE! IT'S SIGN LOOKS SO FRIENDLY!

HAAA! HERE ARE THE TWO FAMOUS SAMURAI'S I HEARD OF! I KNOW WHAT YOU NEED: A GOOD BATH, A WARM MEAL AND SOME REST! MY GIRLS WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU!

BUT.. LET GO OF ME!
MISHIMOTO-SAN! DO NOT ABANDON ME IN THE HANDS OF THOSE FURIES!

DURING THAT TIME, IN SENBO'S HOUSE...

WE WOULD BE STUPID TO LET SUCH AN OCCASION GO! WE NEED THIS TREASURE AS MUCH AS THAT YOUNG PRETENTIOUS MONKEY! I HENCE SUGGEST WE HAVE HIS MEN FOLLOWED! THEY WILL LEAD US TO THAT SECRET PLACE!

A FEW DAYS LATER...

YOUR CARE WAS WONDERFUL,
ENJO, SOON MY SHOULDER WILL
BE TOTALLY HEALED

...AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO
GO BACK TO FIGHTING, NE?

HAAA! YOU'RE ALL THE
SAME!

KOBARATSU-
SAN! SIR BANDO
IS BACK! COME
QUICKLY!!

HAVE SOMEONE
PREPARE HOT TEA, RICE
AND SAKE IN A QUIET
PLACE

AFTER A SHORT MEAL...

KOBARATSU-SAN, WHILE YOU WERE
OPENING AT PASSAGE FOR ME IN THE
AMATERATSU DOOR, YOUR BLADE WAS
BROKEN...

MY LORD! AT YOUR SERVICE, I WILL
BREAK THE NOBLEST BLADE OF
JAPAN IF NEEDED!

ME! ME! I'M NOT ASKING FOR
THAT MUCH! BUT SINCE A
SAMURAI CANNOT SERVE ME
WITHOUT HIS WEAPONS, I HAD
A NEW BLADE FORGED FOR
YOU!

HO!! IT'S TOO MUCH OF AN HONOUR!!
I WAS ONLY DOING MY DUTY!

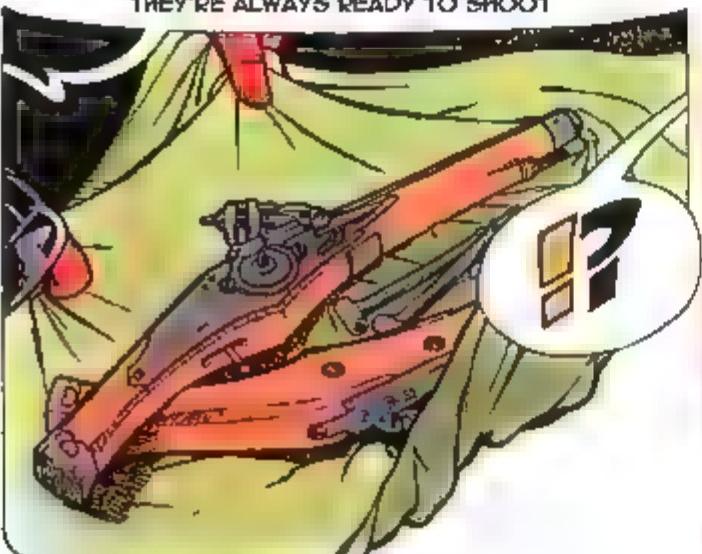
DO NOT REJOICE YET! I
HAVE OTHER PRESENTS FOR
YOU, I AM AFRAID THEY
WON'T PLEASE YOU AS
MUCH AS THIS ONE...

THESE BUNS ARE A RATHER PERFECTIONATE TYPE
KAKE'S ARMOURERS COPIED THEM FROM THOSE USED BY
THE SOUTH BARBARIANS. NO MORE FUZE, ONCE LOADED,
THEY'RE ALWAYS READY TO SHOOT

BUT SIRE BANDO
TH... THESE
WEAPONS ARE FOR
COWARDS! ...AND
THEY WILL NEVER BE
WORTHY AS A GOOD
BOW!

WHAT? YOU'RE TALKING
WITHOUT USING YOUR
HEAD, SAMURAI!

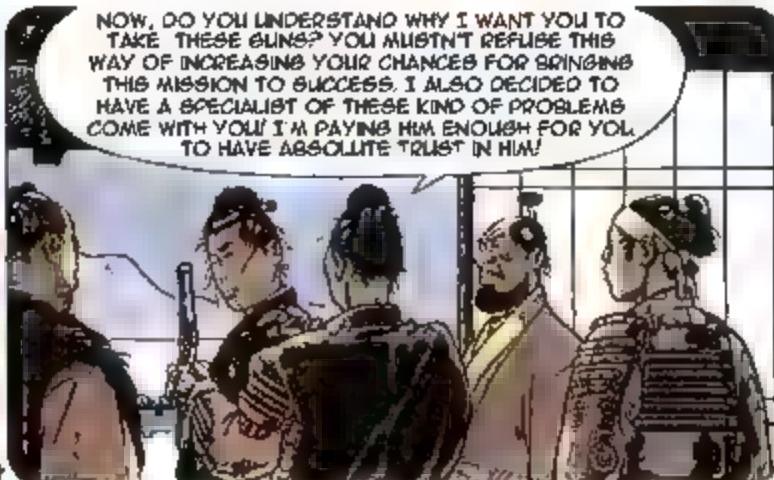
SHIKI, LEND HIM YOUR
BOW, I CHALLENGE HIM!



WE'LL SEE WHICH OF THESE TWO WEAPONS IS MORE EFFICIENT!

DO YOU SEE THAT LANTERN OVER THERE? I BET YOU DON'T HIT IT WITH AN ARROW

HUM... YOU KNOW, KAKEI-SAN IT'S NOT A FEAT TO HIT AT THIS DISTANCE FOR AN ARCHER SUCH AS KOSARATSU...



NOW, DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I WANT YOU TO TAKE THESE GUNS? YOU MUSTN'T REFUSE THIS WAY OF INCREASING YOUR CHANCES FOR BRINGING THIS MISSION TO SUCCESS. I ALSO DECIDED TO HAVE A SPECIALIST OF THESE KIND OF PROBLEMS COME WITH YOU! I'M PAYING HIM ENOUGH FOR YOU TO HAVE ABSOLUTE TRUST IN HIM!

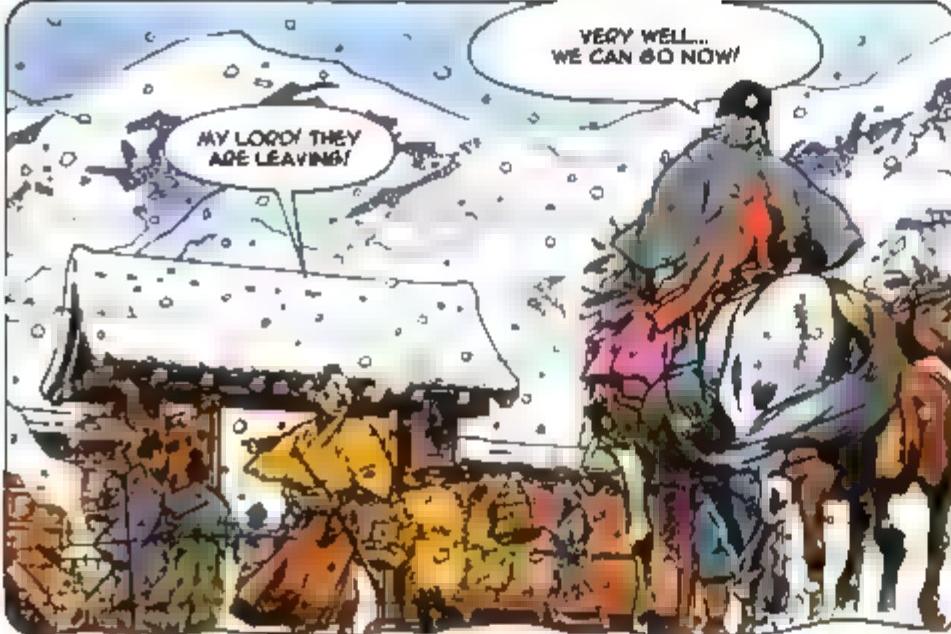
THE NEXT MORNING, JUST AFTER THE SUN ROSE...



VERY WELL...
WE CAN GO NOW!

MY LORD! THEY
ARE LEAVING!

DO NOT BE TOO HASTY, FUJITA-SAN!
NO NEED TO AROUSE THEIR SUSPICION!
THEIR PRINTS WILL INDICATE TO US THE
ROAD THEY'RE TAKING WITHOUT ANY
RISK OF BEING WRONG!



RIDING WITH DIFFICULTY AGAINST THE HEAVY
WIND, WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO SEE ANYTHING...

HOW COULD SIR GANDO HAVE A
NINJA COME WITH US? DOESN'T
HE REMEMBER THE WAY HIS
FATHER WAS KILLED?

LOOK! IT'S THE
FRONTIER POST, WE
ARE BACK IN HODO-SEN!



IT'S BEEN QUITE SOME TIME
SINCE HE WENT IN! WHY IS HE
TAKING SO LONG?
LET'S GO!



AFTER AN ARGUMENT WITH THE NINJA, KOBARATSU AND MISHITO HAVE REACH SHIKOTSU LAKE AND THE VILLAGE OF HIS FORMER MASTER, SIR YEMITSU...

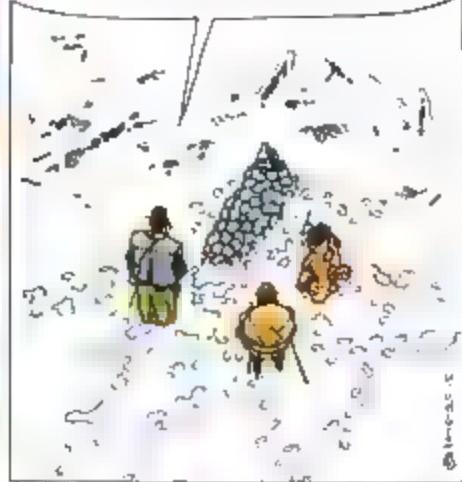
HIM... KOBARATSU-SAN, WE HAVE TO GO NOW... IT WON'T CHANGE ANYTHING TO STAY HERE ANY LONGER AND WE RISK BEING CAUGHT BY A PATROL ANY MOMENT!

I CONVINCED HAKUSHI TO TAKE US TO THE RIDGE LEADING TO ABUTA. IN EXCHANGE, WE WILL LEAVE HIM OUR HORSES!

YOU ARE RIGHT, MISHITO-SAN. WE HAVE A MISSION TO ACCOMPLISH! I STILL HAVE ONE LAST THING TO DO BEFORE LEAVING THIS PLACE...



UPON THIS TOMB, I SWEAR TO KILL THAT DOS MATSUMOTO, AND TO PUT THE HEAD OF YEMITSU BACK ON HIS BODY SO HE CAN AT LAST REST IN PEACE!



COME! HEI! HEI! HEI!
THE PATH LEADING TO THE
RIDGE STARTS OVER
THERE...

HEI! HEI! HEI! ...SINCE THE MASTER'S DEATH, NOBODY DARES COME HERE! NOT EVEN MITSURU'S PATROLS. THEY'RE TOO AFRAID THAT THEY COULD MEET SIR YEMITSU'S GHOST! ONLY A FEW GODS SNEAK AROUND HERE! HEI! HEI! HEI!



AT THE VILLAGE...



FOR A LONG TIME, THE TWO SAMURAI'S AND THE DWARF CLIMBED THE MOUNTAIN LEADING TOWARDS ABUTA, TOWARDS THE SEA, WHERE 'ETA'S TREASURE' WAS HIDDEN.

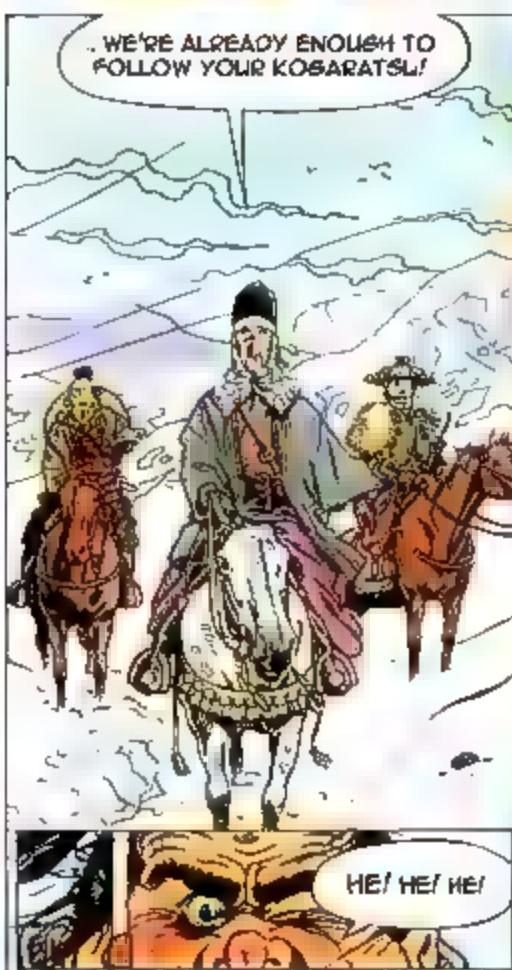
...THEN, ON THE OTHER SIDE, THE DWARF HAD TO LEAVE THEM. NOW, FROM THE TOP OF THE RIDGE, HAKUSHI IS WATCHING KOBARATSU AND MISHITO, SMALL BLACK FIGURES, LOST IN THE IMMACULATE IMMENSITY AND WALKING DOWN TOWARDS THE PLAIN, FURTHERING THEIR MISSION...



MAY THE GODS OF THE MOUNTAIN AND
OF THE SEA FOLLOW AND WATCH OVER
YOU, KOBARATSUBI-SAN!



WE'RE ALREADY ENOUGH TO FOLLOW YOUR KOSARATS!



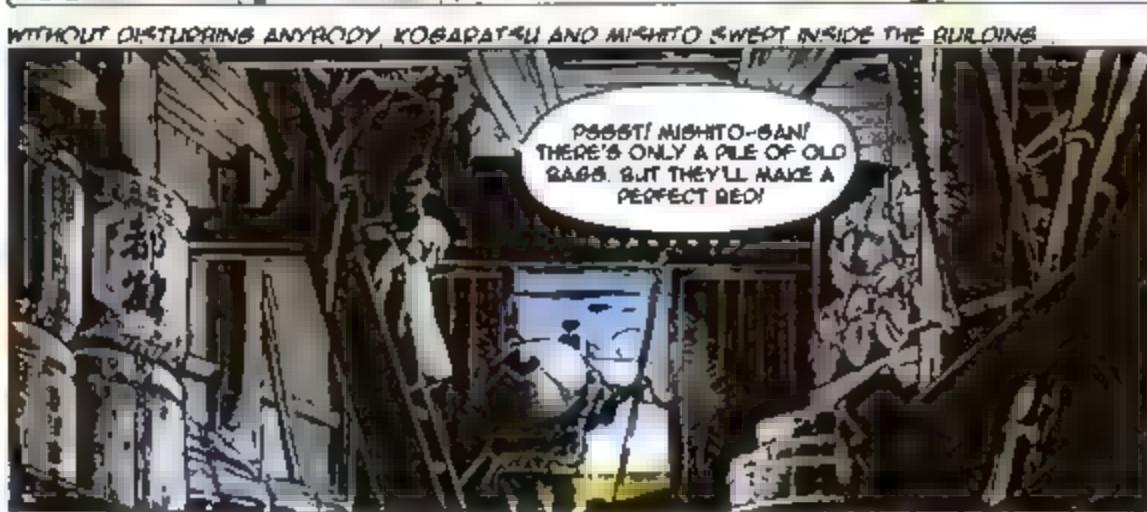
HE/ HER/ HES



DID YOU HEAR?
THAT CRY...

HMM... MUST BE A PREDATOR HUNTING! LET'S HURRY THE ROAD TO ASITA IS LONG. WE'D BETTER BE THERE BEFORE NIGHT FALLS, RIGHT?

WITH THE NIGHT, CAME THE HARSH COLD WIND, SHARP AS A BLADE BUT MISHTO AND KOSARATSU'S TRIP IS COMING TO AN END



I WAS RIGHT!
THERE ARE A LOT OF THEM.
THEY MUST BE SOMEONE
IMPORTANT'S ESCORTS!

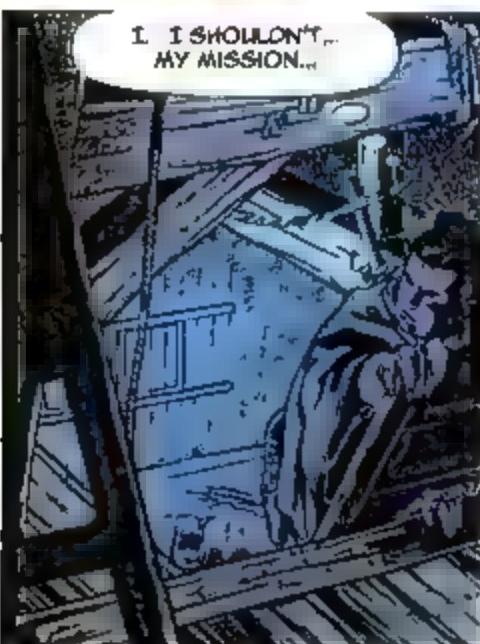


BY BENKEI'S
BLOOD! I... I'M
DREAMING!
PRINCESS ISHI,
HERE, IN ABUTA!



THERE'S LIGHT IN THE ROOM!
NO DOUBT, IT IS HER FIGURE!
SHE'S SO CLOSE TO ME! SO
CLOSE... IF I DARED...

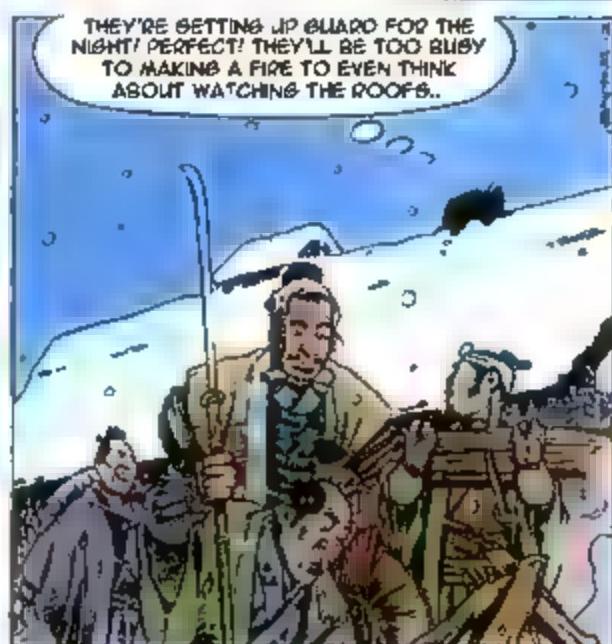
I SHOULDN'T
DO THIS TO
MY MISSION...

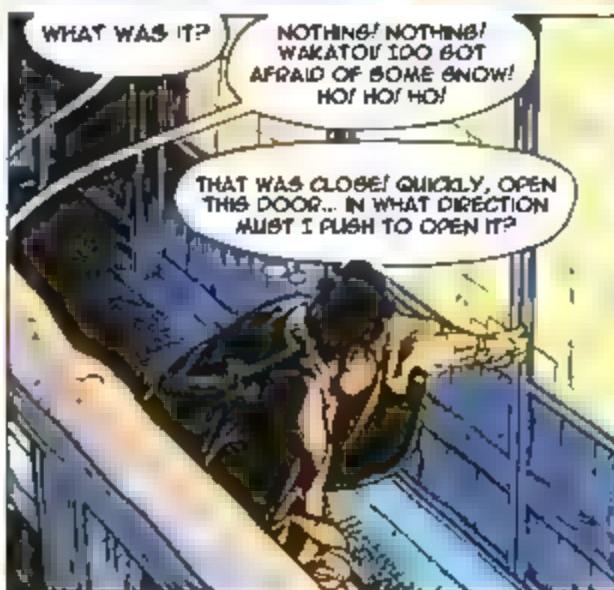


THE HELL WITH IT! I WANT TO
LIVE FOR MYSELF! BE IT ONLY
FOR ONE NIGHT! EVEN IF I
HAVE TO DIE AFTERWARDS!

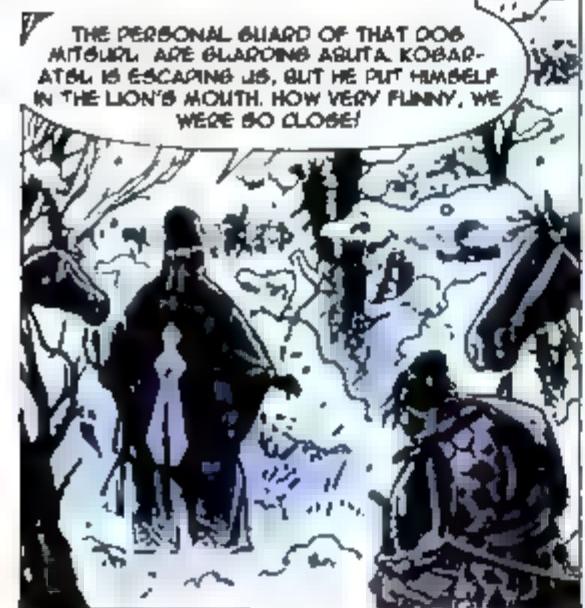


THEY'RE SETTING UP GUARD FOR THE
NIGHT! PERFECT! THEY'LL BE TOO BUSY
TO MAKE A FIRE TO EVEN THINK
ABOUT WATCHING THE ROOFS...

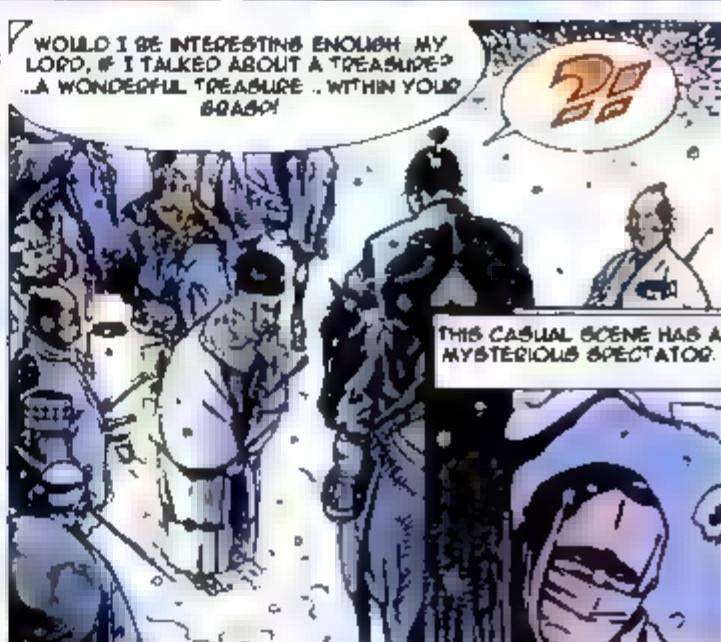
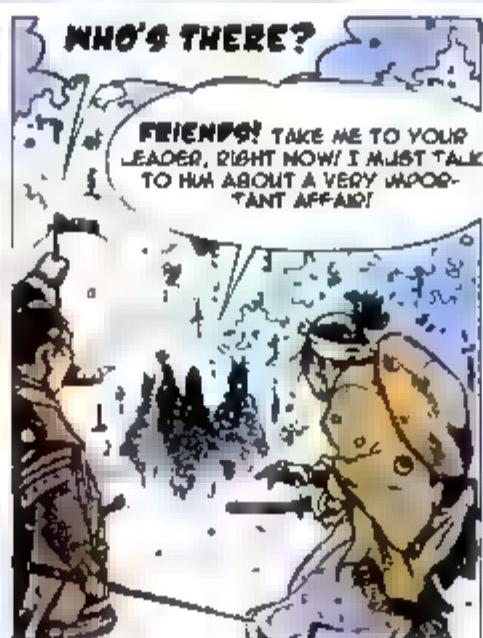




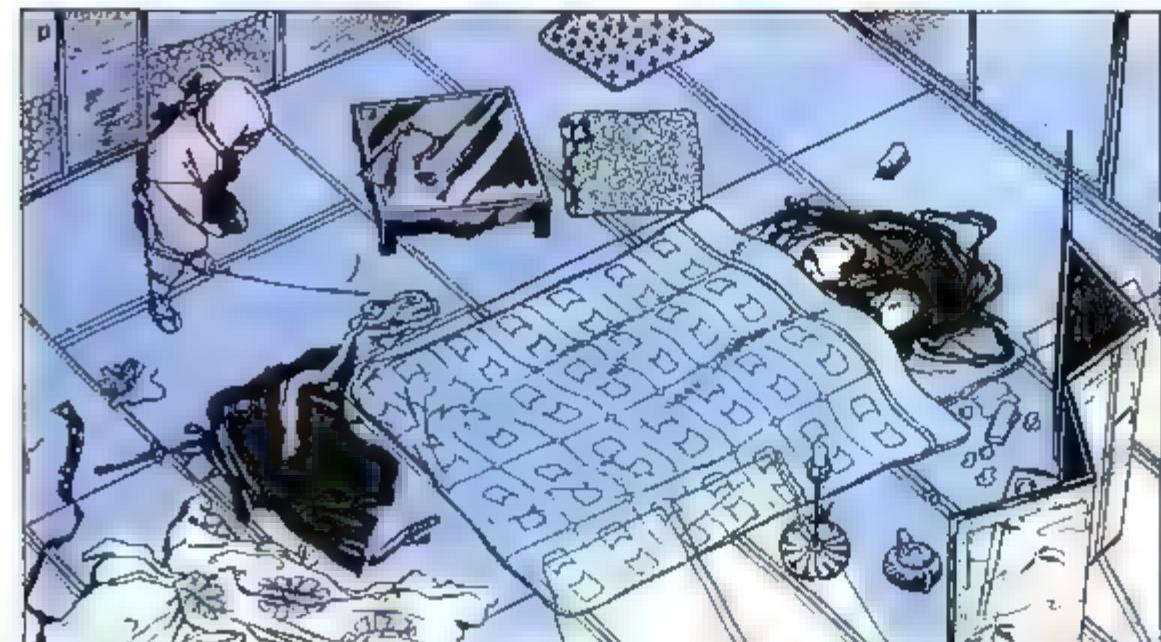
AT THE SAME TIME FUJITA, WITH ONE OF HIS BUSHIS,
HAS ALSO REACHED THE VICINITY OF THE VILLAGE.

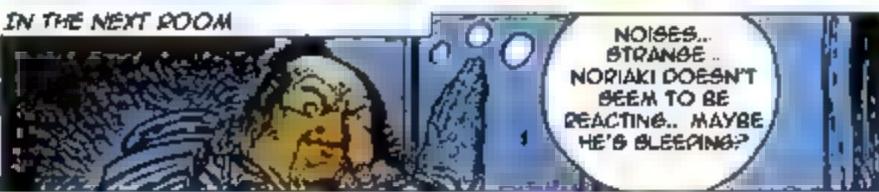
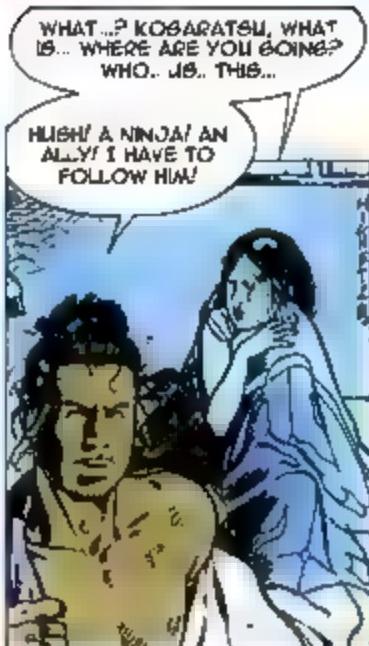
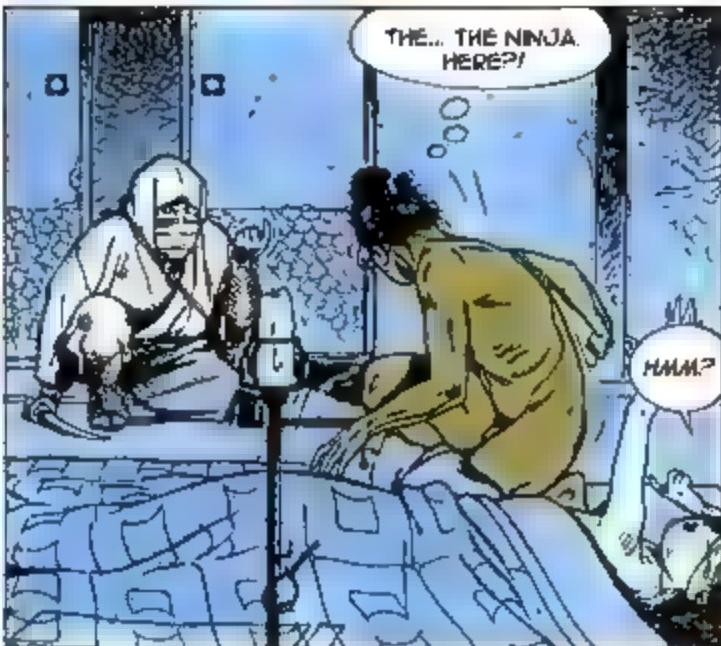


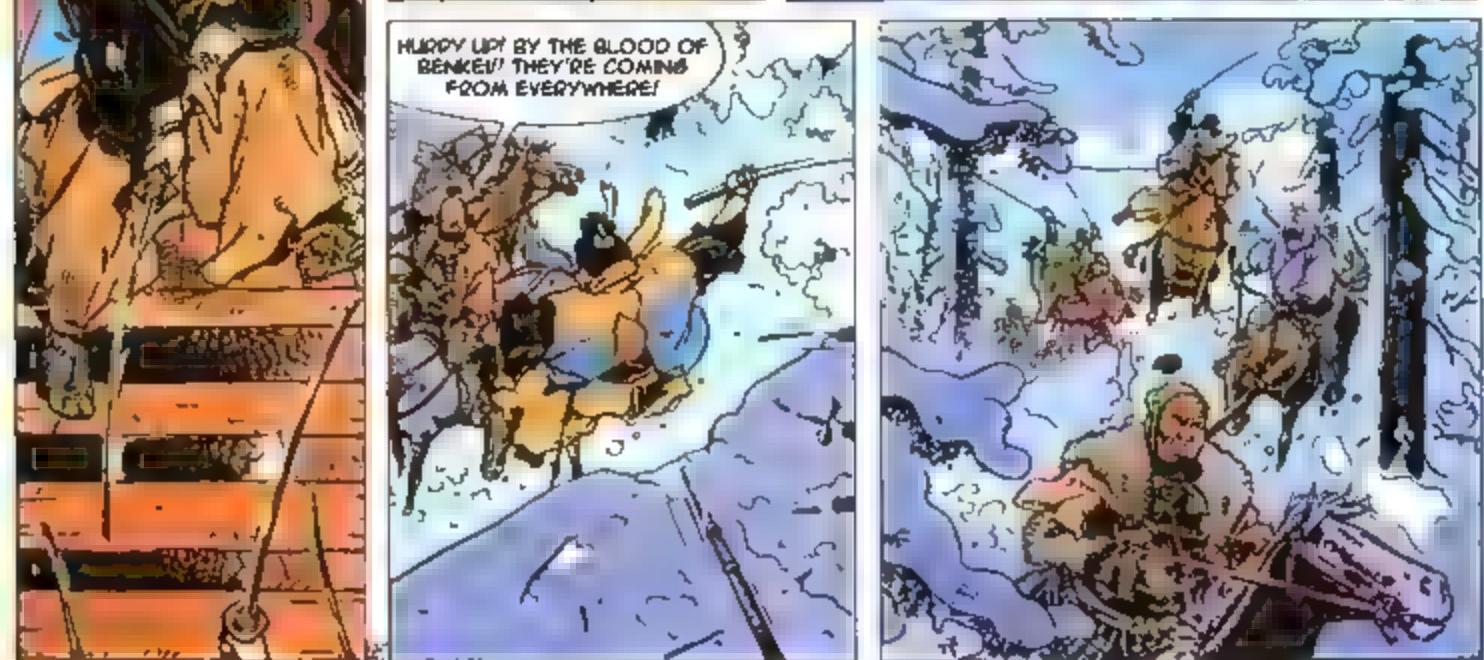
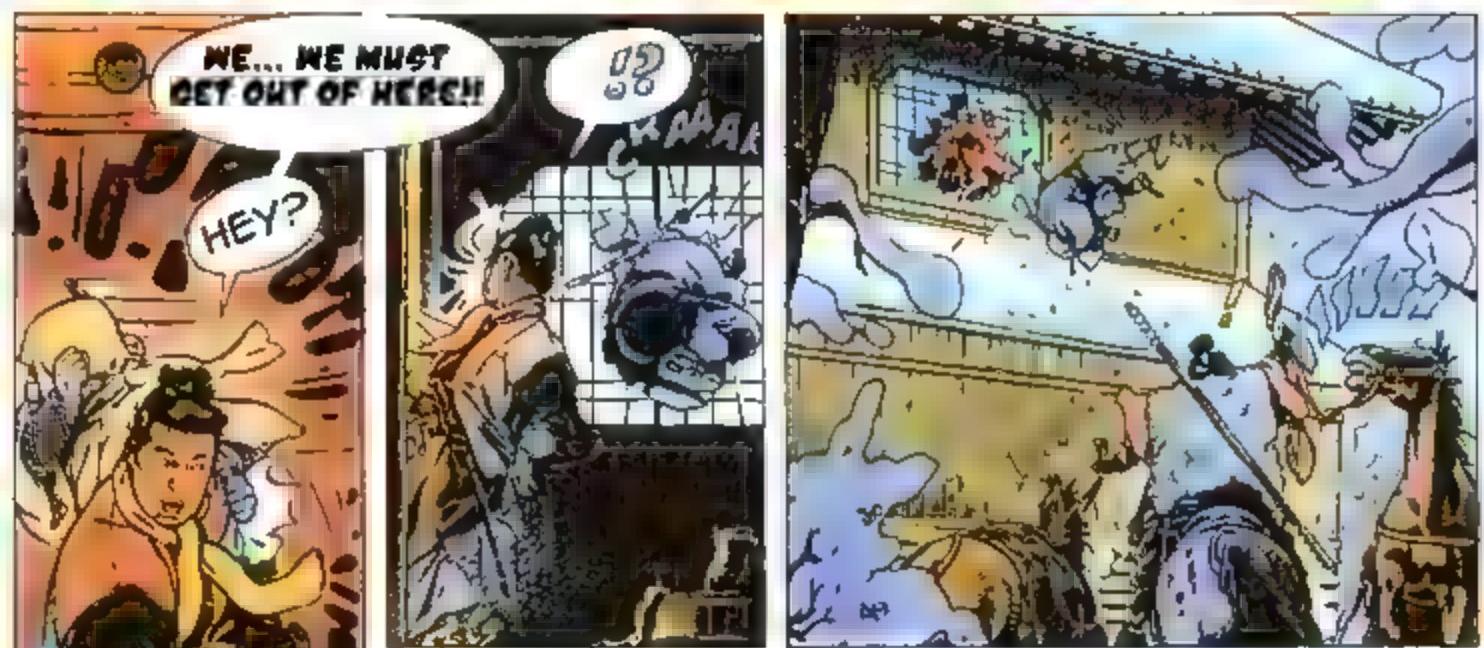
THE DWARF THAT
KILLED MY BROTHER
AND INJURED ME CAST
A SPELL ON US! WE'D
BETTER GIVE UP. WE
CAN'T DO ANYTHING
NOW!



THE PALE LIGHT OF DAWN RISES ON ABUTA.
IT IS THE TIME WHEN THE TIRED GUARDS
DROP THEIR ATTENTION...







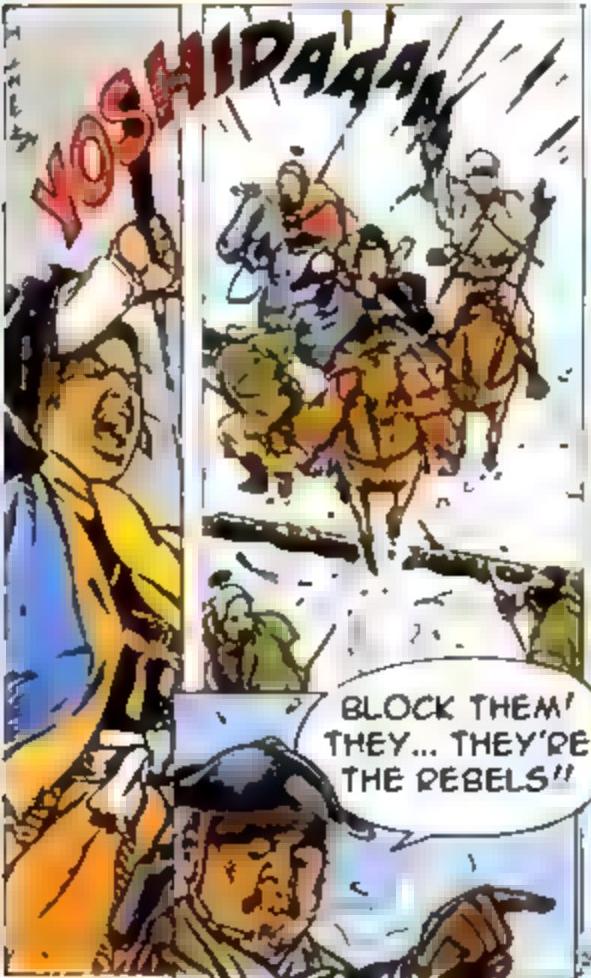
MITSUTO-SAN! WILL YOU EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT'S GOING ON?

THE NINJA CAME TO ME DURING THE NIGHT! IF NOT FOR HIM, WE'D HAVE BEEN CAPTURED BY MITSUJI ALREADY! WE'VE BEEN BETRAYED!

BRIES LED BY THE SNAIL OF GOLI FOLLOWED US SINCE WE LEFT BENIO'S PLACE IN THE MOUNTAINS WHEN THEY SAW THAT WE WERE GETTING AWAY FROM THEM, THEY GOLI US OUT TO THAT DOG MAT SUMOTO HIS MEN ARE ALREADY GUARDING ALL THE ROADS.



UNLESS HE IS EVEN MORE CUNNING THAN HIS RIVALS AND HAS DECIDED TO HELP US UNTIL WE REACH THE TOP ASHORE AND RETRACE OUR STEPS AFTERWARD



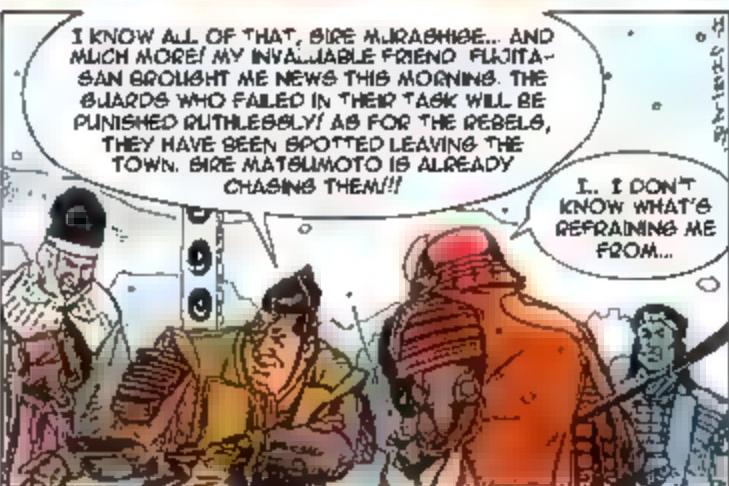
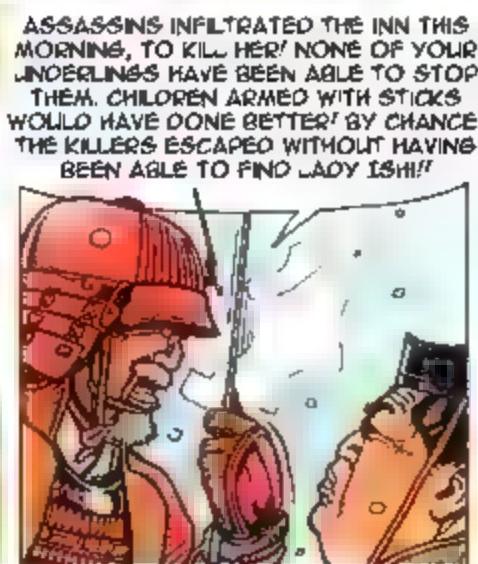
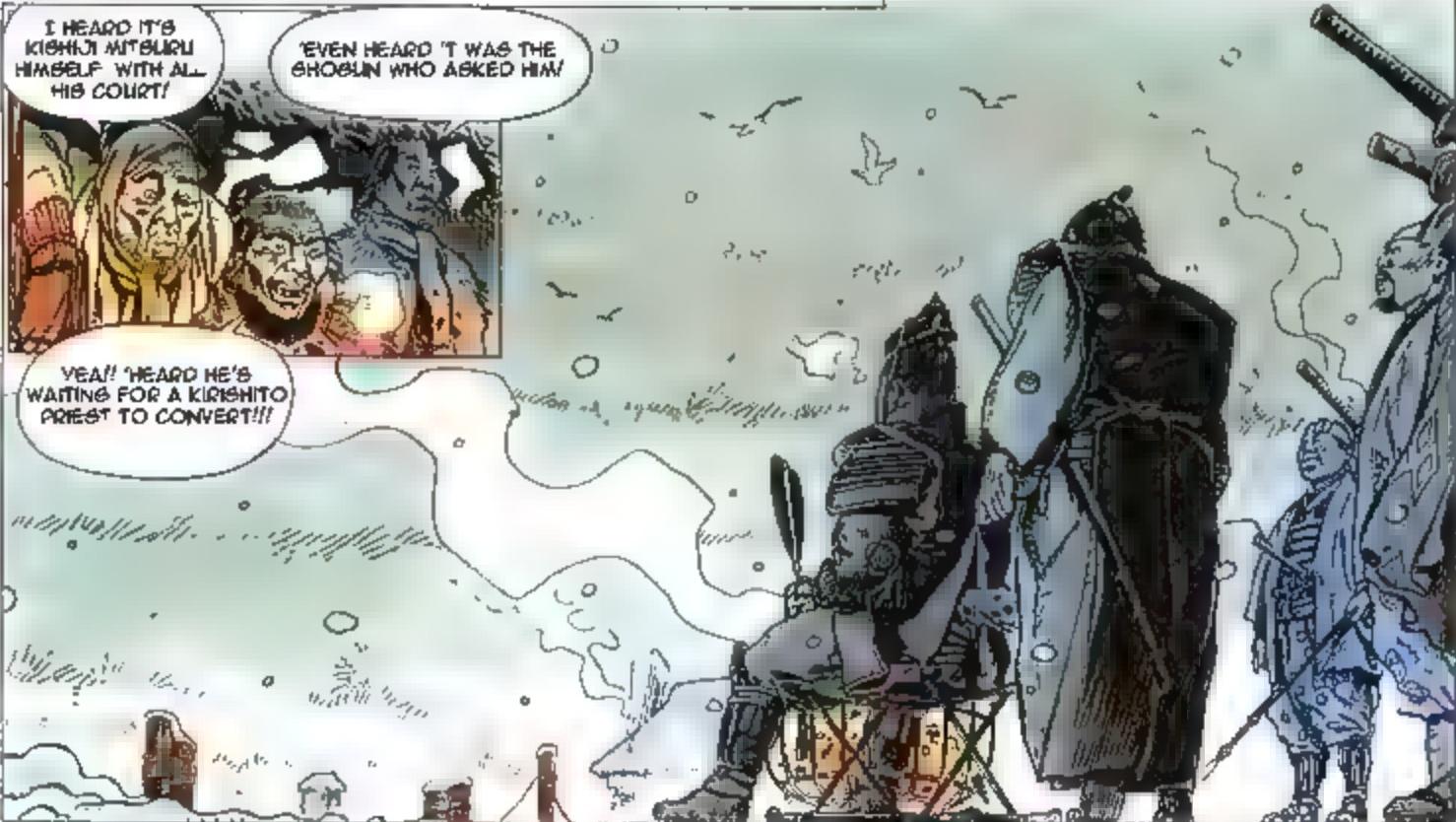
BLOCK THEM! THEY... THEY'RE THE REBELS!"

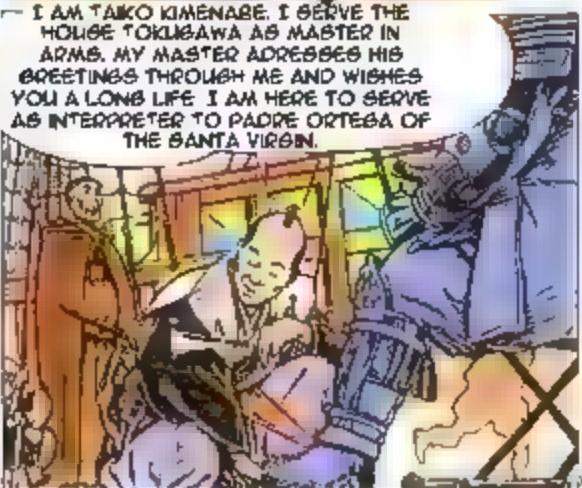
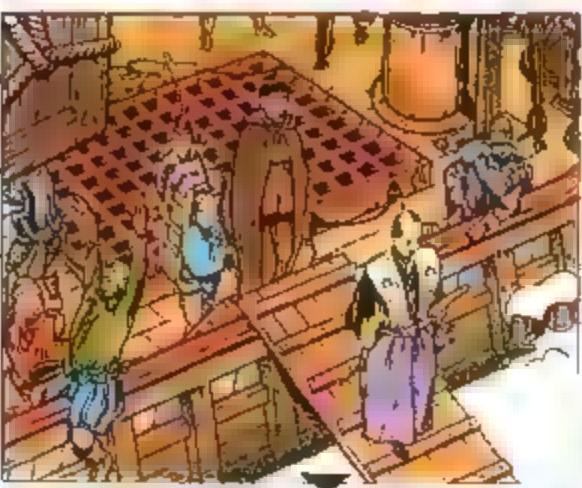
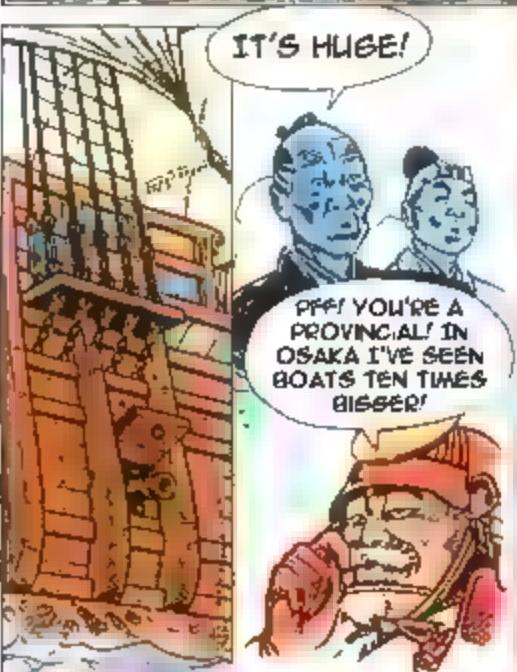
"OAH HORSE! HOOO! HOOOO!"



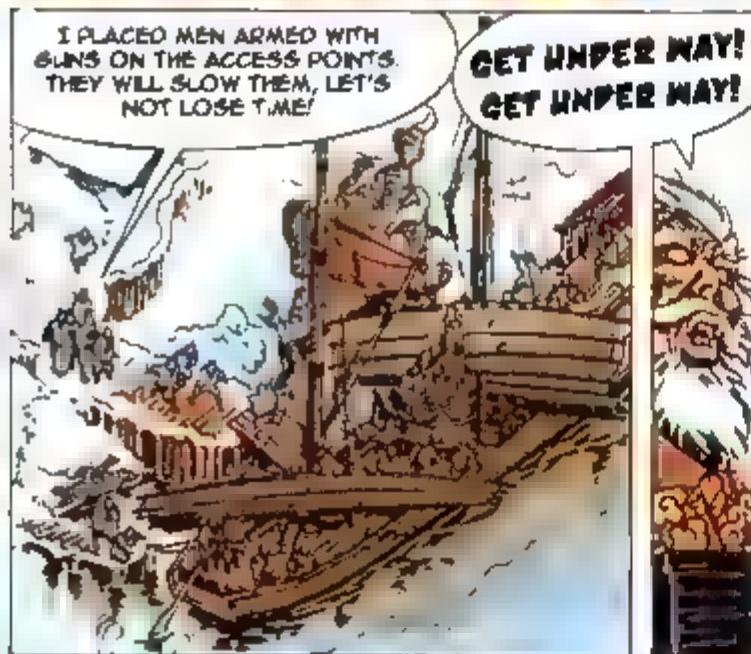
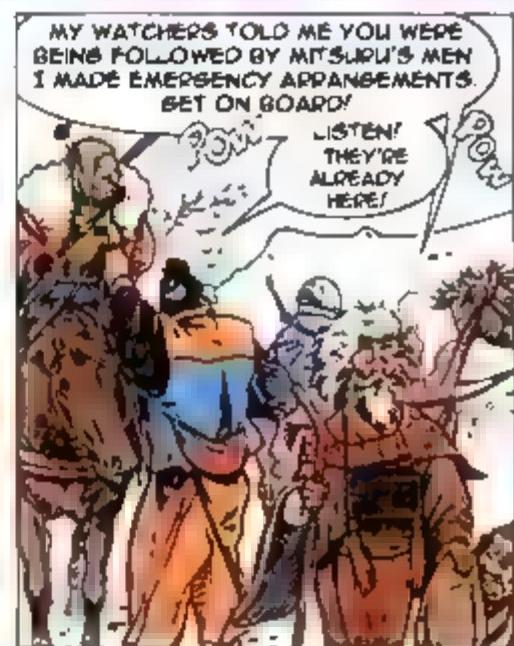
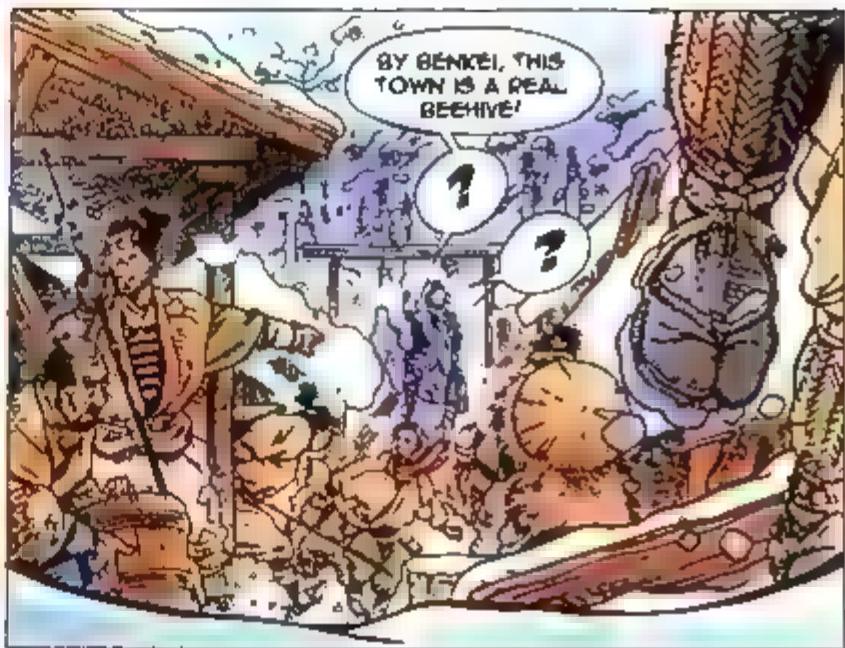


WHILE THE WINTER SUN SLOWLY RISES ABOVE THE SEA, THE SAILORS OF ABUTA BEHELD A SINGLE SPECTACLE





WHILE MITSURU, AMAZED, IS CONTEMPLATING HIS GIFT
ON THE QUAY OF ASITA...



IF ONLY WE HAD A
BOAT!

BUT... SIRE MAT-
SUMOTO! WE COULD
BORROW THE KNIGHT
TO BE

BY ARABAWA NO KAMU YOU ARE
RIGHT! THE KOSHINO PRIEST WHO CAME
TO SEE SIRE MITSUJI WAS ON A BAR-
BARIAN BOAT ARMED WITH CANNONS
OUR MASTERS CAN CONVINCE HIM TO
LEND IT TO US.

LET US HEAD FOR ABUTA!
THEY HAVEN'T ESCAPED US YET!

LET'S GO!

THEY'RE LEAVING! THEY DECIDED
NOT TO FOLLOW US!

HMM... I HEAR HORSES GALLOPING!
HE WHO GIVES UP ON TRACKING
DOES NOT GALLOP! WE WILL HAVE
SOME REST THOUGH, AND I OWE
YOU EXPLANATIONS, NE?

I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU FOR
THIRTEEN YEARS! SINCE SIRE
YOSHIDA, MY MASTERS, BOUND ME BY
THIS MISSION! FINALLY I CAN CARRY
IT OUT! MAY THE SPIRIT OF MY LATE
MASTER WITNESS MY FIDELITY!

MY NAME IS BUNKA. I WAS
WORKING IN A SMALL TEMPLE
NEAR THE E-TA VILLAGE ONE DAY.
MEN CAME TO TELL ME THAT THE
PREVIOUS DAYS TEMPEST HAD
THROWN THE WRECK OF A BAR-
BARIAN SHIP ON OUR SHORES.

THERE WAS ONLY A BROKEN SHELL LEFT.
I DECIDED TO EXPLORE IT. THERE WERE NO
SURVIVORS ON BOARD. THE DECK CARRIED
ALL OVER IT THE MARKS FROM THE SOOT OF
THE SEA.

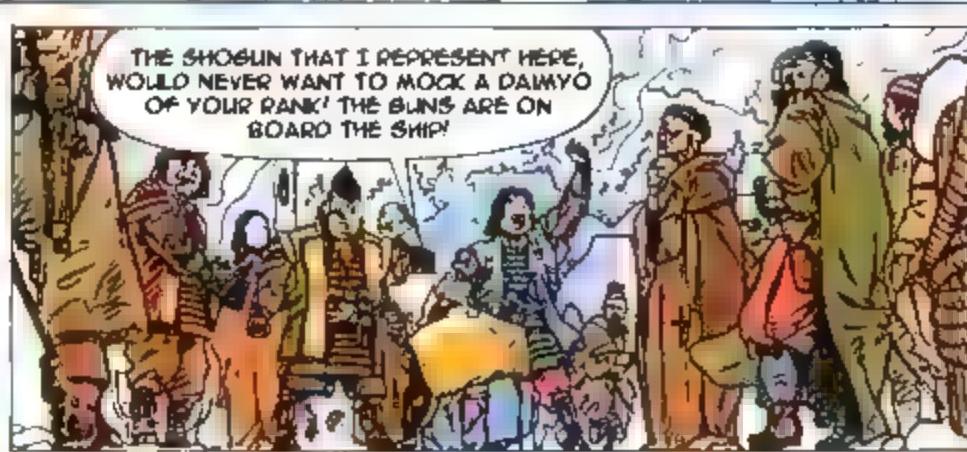
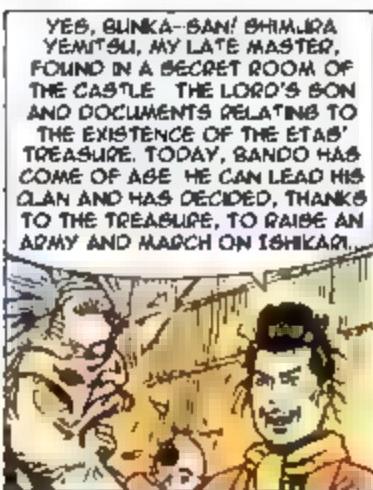
BUT IN THE HOLD... I DISCOVERED A DEAL
TREASURE!



I DISCRETELY REPORTED IT TO YOSHIDA. HE ORDERED ME TO HIDE THE TREASURE AND MAKE ANY TRACES OF THE BOAT DISAPPEAR. HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, MITSURU, WAS VISITING THE PROVINCE WITH HIS COURT. YOSHIDA DIDN'T WANT TO ADOUSE HIS BREED.

ALAS... THE NIGHT OF THE BANQUET, MITSURU HAD OUR LORD ASSASSINATED AND TOOK CONTROL OF THE HOGO. IF YOU KNOW THE REST...

YES, BLINKA-SAN! SHIMURA YEMITSU, MY LATE MASTER, FOUND IN A SECRET ROOM OF THE CASTLE. THE LORD'S SON AND DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE EXISTENCE OF THE ETAB'S TREASURE. TODAY, BANDO HAS COME OF AGE. HE CAN LEAD HIS CLAN AND HAS DECIDED, THANKS TO THE TREASURE, TO RAISE AN ARMY AND MARCH ON ISHIKARI.



SIRE MITSURU!
HHHH... AT LAST!
HHHHFF...

WHAT...
WHAT IS THE
MATTER?

THEY GOT ON BOARD A SHIP, LORD, AND ARE
ESCAPING BY SEA! HHHH... THE TREASURE
MUST BE ON BOARD! I NEED THE KIRISHI-
TO'S SHIP, OR ELSE THEY WILL ESCAPE!
HHHHFF...

UHP!

BUT... BUT THE KIRISHITO
IS OUR GUEST AND ALLY
I CAN'T! IT WOULD BE...

PRAY EXCUSE MY
BOLDNESS, BUT IF YOU
TAKE HIS SHIP, MY
LORD, YOU WILL SEIZE
THE TREASURE AND,
MOREOVER, THE GUNS
WILL BE YOURS!

MY NEW ADVISER CONVINCED ME,
MATSUMOTO-SAN! ...YOU CAN TAKE
THE KIRISHITO'S BOAT!

WHAT... WHAT ARE THEY
SAYING? THEY'RE
TALKING ABOUT ME
AREN'T THEY?

SIRE... THANK YOU FOR
TRUSTING ME! I WILL
NOT DISAPPOINT YOU!

ONLY OF YOUR SHIPS!
THEY WANT TO MAKE
USE OF IT

BUT... BUT THEY CAN'T! ...I
WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO GO
BACK TO EDO WITHOUT A
SHIP! ...HEEY!

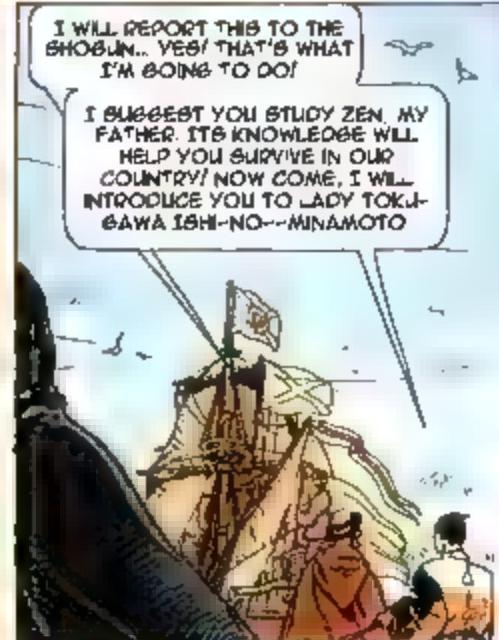
YOU WON'T EITHER WITHOUT
A HEAD! IT WOULD BE WISE
FOR YOU TO STAY CALM.
SIRE MATSUMOTO IS A
RATHER, HMM... IMPULSIVE
PERSON!

WHAT DOES THAT MONKEY
WANT FROM ME, PILOT?

! ?
I THINK THEY WOULD LIKE
US TO LEAVE, SENOR!

I WILL REPORT THIS TO THE
SHOGUN... YES! THAT'S WHAT
I'M GOING TO DO!

I SUGGEST YOU STUDY ZEN. MY
FATHER'S KNOWLEDGE WILL
HELP YOU SURVIVE IN OUR
COUNTRY! NOW COME, I WILL
INTRODUCE YOU TO LADY TOKU-
GAWA ISHI-NO-MINAMOTO



GOING FULL SPEED AHEAD, THE ETAS' SHIP SAILLED TOWARDS HONDO WITHOUT SPOTTING ANY FOLLOWERS...

AHEAD!
MUTSU BAY!

WELL, MISHITO-SAN! DOES YOUR INJURY HURT SO MUCH THAT YOU CAN'T APPRECIATE THE BEAUTY OF THIS VIEW?

MMMP?

THOSE CLIFFS AHEAD. THEY BELONGS TO THE YUKIS. ARE THEY FRIENDS OR FOE? I DON'T LIKE HAVING TO SET THE TREASURE BACK ON THEIR TERRITORY!

DO NOT WORRY. WE WON'T HAVE TO LAND IN HONDO. IT HAS JUST BEEN REPORTED THAT WE HAVE REACHED OUR DESTINATION.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I DON'T...

PEACE, MY YOUNG AND IMPETUOUS FRIEND! YOUR QUESTIONS SHALL BE ANSWERED SOON!

BUT, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? DO YOU MEAN THAT THE TREASURE IS IN THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA?

YOU WILL HAVE TO UNDRESS AND FOLLOW ME IF YOU WANT THE ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION! ...OR MAYBE YOU WILL BE PATIENT ENOUGH TO WAIT FOR MY RETURN?

BY THE GODS!
WAIT! I'M COMING!

IF YOU MEET WITH THE GOD OF THE SEA, TELL
HIM I SAID HELLO! MAR! MARY MAR!

HEY! BE CAREFUL WITH
THE BARREL OR YOU
WILL...

HOOHOO BY
BENKEI'S BLOOD,
IT IS FREEZING!

IF THE BARREL IS ABOVE
US, YOU CAN TELL THEM
TO LOWER IT, KATOU!

YES SENSEI
YOU CAN
LOWER IT!

TAKE YOUR SEATS
AND FOR GOD'S SAKE,
DO NOT MOVE!

HE! HE! HE! FUNNY, ISN'T IT? THIS TECHNIQUE
IS USED BY THE SOUTHERN BARRAGANS TO
GET THE FREIGHT FROM THEIR WRECKS. WHEN I
RECEIVED MY MISSION I DECIDED THAT THE
BEST HIDING PLACE WOULD BE WHERE IT
SHOULD HAVE BEEN...

SOME FIFTEEN KENS
UNDER THE SURFACE OF
THE WATER, THAT IS!
LOOK! DO YOU NOT
SEE A TREASURE
UNDER YOU FEET?

THIS WAY SAMURAI
STAY INSIDE OR YOU
WILL DIE!

LOOK AGAIN! IT MUST BE CLOSE TO US!

YES! THERE! I CAN MAKE OUT A DARK SHADOW THAT LOOKS LIKE A... A

YES SAMURA! A GUN!
A HUGE GUN! JAPAN NEVER KNEW A BIGGER ONE! BUT WE HAVE TO RETRIEVE IT FROM THE SEA AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. OUR DIVING CASE WON'T HOLD AGAINST THE PRESSURE MUCH LONGER

...OF THE TEN ROWS OF AMMUNITION WE WILL ONLY TAKE FIVE. OUR SHIP MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO CARRY THEM ALL. GO NOW!

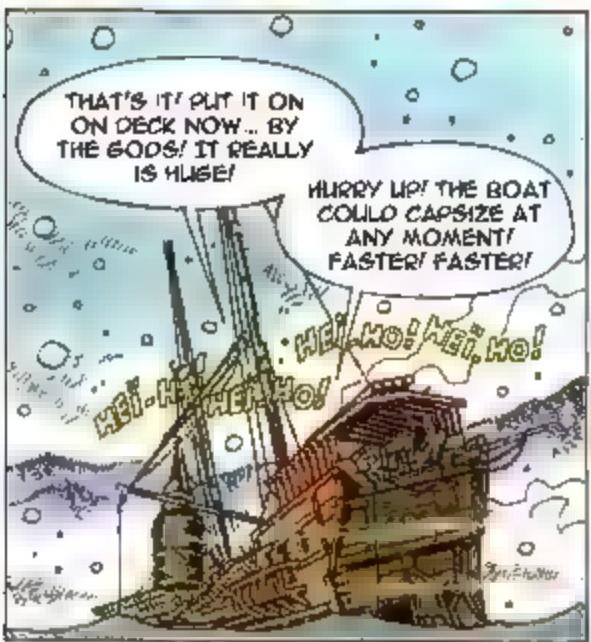
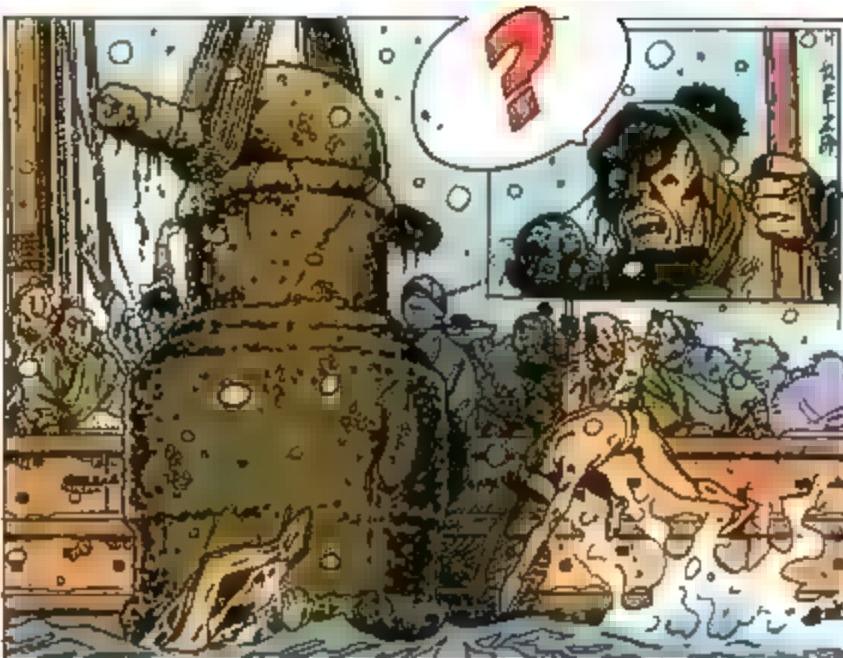
HAAA HAAA...MASTER! THE FIRST ROPE IS ATTACHED!
HAAA...

VERY WELL! KATO, TIE IT TO ONE OF THESE BALLOONS!

THERE! THE FIRST ROPE! THE OTHER WILL FOLLOW SOON! LET'S GET TO WORK!

THEN, AFTER ONE HOUR OF EXHAUSTING UNDERWATER WORK...

LET'S PRAY THE SHIP WILL HOLD

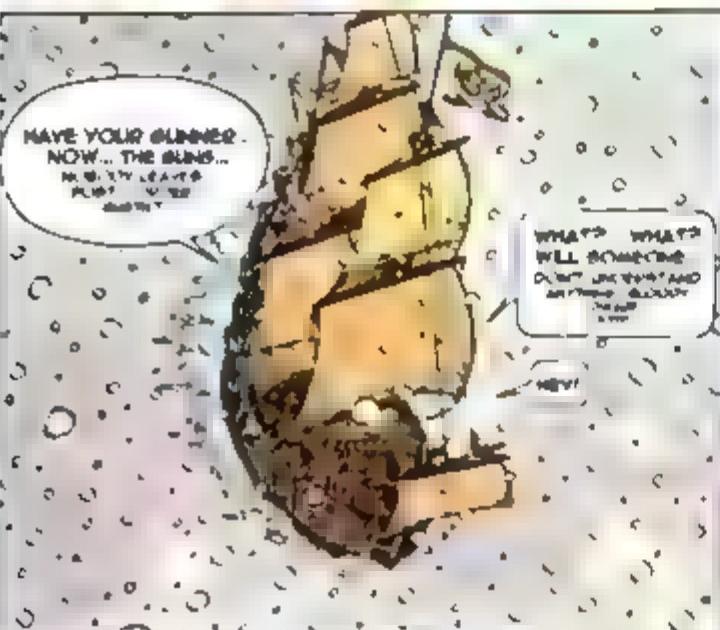


AFTER SOME TIME UNDERWATER, FIGHTING AGAINST THE COLD AND THE EXHAUSTION, THE MEN RETRIEVED FIFTEEN ROWS OF AMMUNITION...





WITH AN INCREDIBLE VOLATILITY, THE STORM BATTLES THE NAMBAK SHIP. HOWEVER, AFTER SOME TIME...



THE MORNING CAME, AND WITH IT, THE FOG, JUST ON THE SURFACE OF THE SEA.

NOTHING... NOTHING! STILL NOTHING! WITH THIS FOG, A HUNDRED BOATS COULD PASS AND WE WOULDN'T SEE THEM!

THERE! THERE!
THERE THEY ARE!

WHERE?
WHERE? I
CAN'T SEE
ANYTHING!

I, HUM... I WAS
SLEEPING...

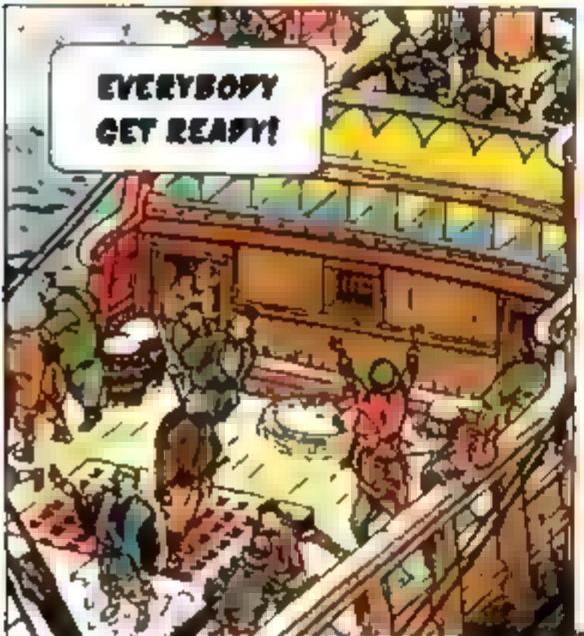
YOU SHOULD WATCH YOUR
NERVES, DOKA-SAN!

I... I AM TERRIBLY
SORRY, TOBEI-
SAN

BUT...

THEY... THEY'RE COMING
OUR WAY! THE FOOLS!
GET READY FOR FIGHTING!

EVERYBODY
GET READY!

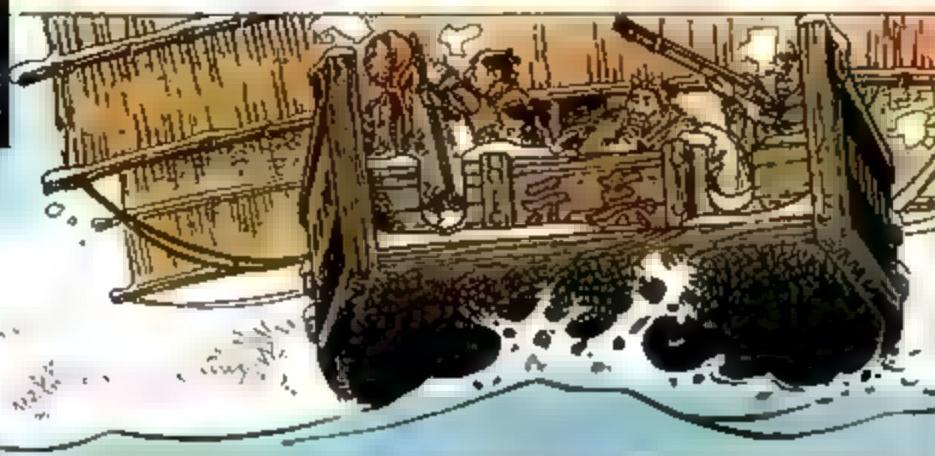
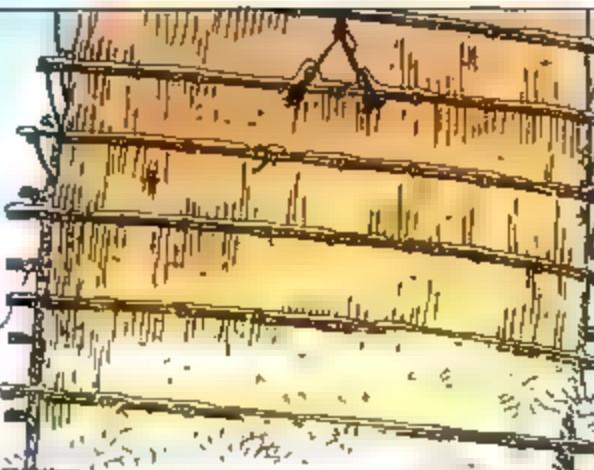


THEY'RE COMING CLOSER...
THEY'LL PROBABLY TRY TO COME
ON BOARD OUR SHIP, HE HE HE...
SHOOT ONLY WHEN THEY'RE
CLOSE!



JESUS CHRIST!
THEY'RE GETTING TOO
CLOSE... OUR SHOTS
WILL PASS ABOVE
THEM!

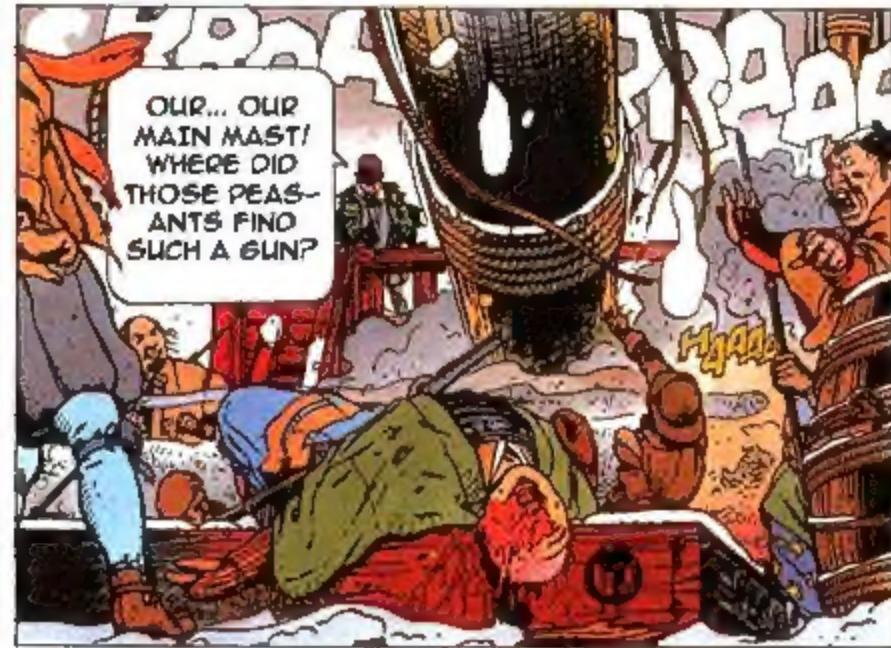
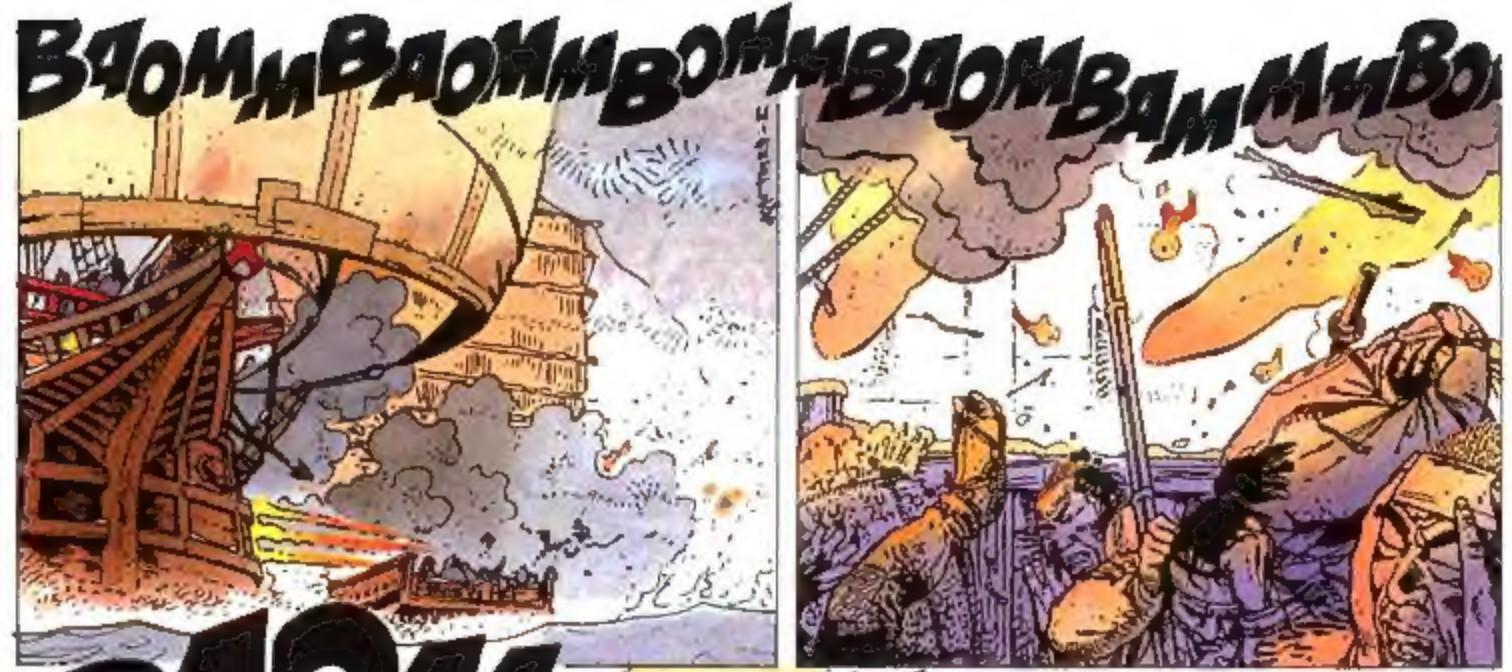
IT DOES NOT CONCERN
US, ONLY JUST FIRE THE
GUN AND THE EXCITED
MAN ON DECK WILL BE
HAPPY!



NOW!
Fuego

FIRE!

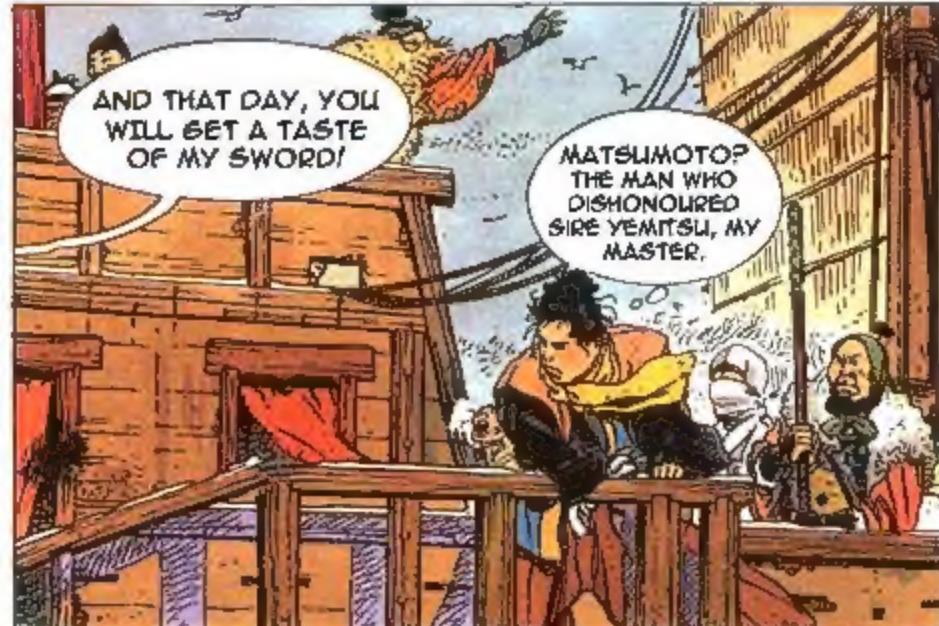
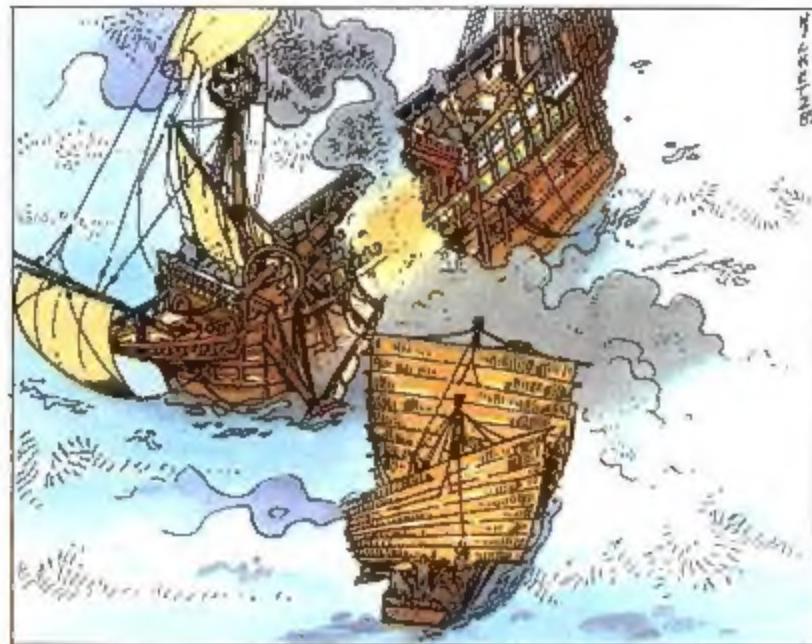




BUNKA-SAN! BUNKA-SAN! WE HIT IT! THEY LOST THEIR MAIN MAST!

BY THE GOOS! ...WE DID IT!... THEY WON'T CATCH US NOW! QUICKLY, SAMURAI, HEAD TOWARDS THE BAY OF THE VOLCANOES! THE SOONER WE ARE IN HOKKAIDO, THE BETTER!

YOU ARE RIGHT, BUNKA-SAN, SIRE BANDO IS WAITING FOR US. TOO BAD...



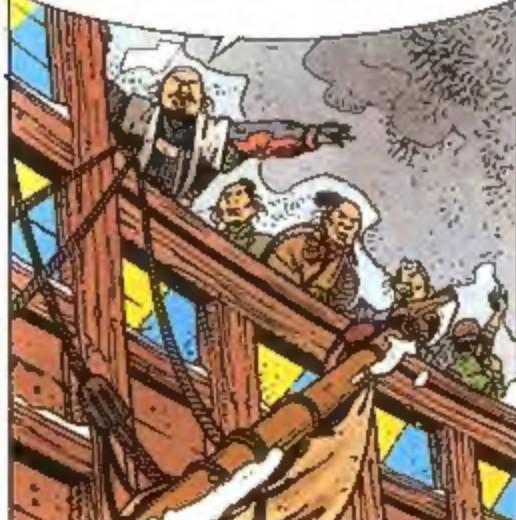
WHOEVER BE YOU SAMURAI, I, MIYAJIMA MATSUMOTO SWEAR THAT JAPAN WILL BE TOO SMALL FOR YOU TO HIDE! SOONER OR LATER I WILL FIND YOU!

I AM NAKAMURA KOSARATSU! YOU KILLED AND HUMILIATED MY MASTER! AS SOON AS I AM FREE FROM MY MISSION, I WILL BE YOURS, DOG!

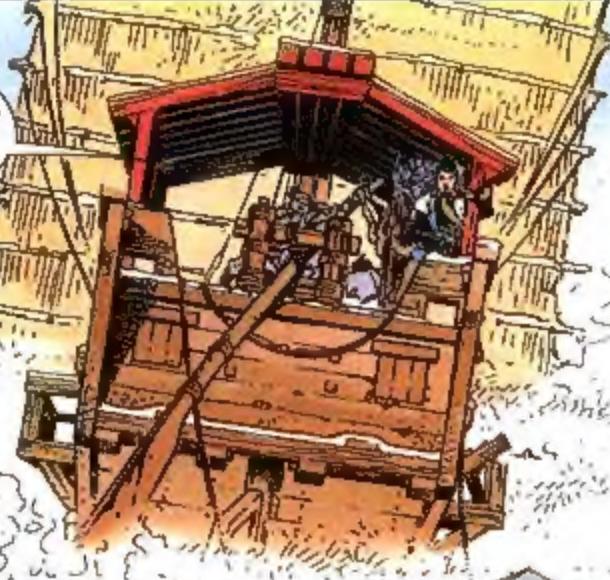
STAY ALIVE REBEL UNDERLING! STAY ALIVE FOR ME!

I SHOULD HAVE FINISHED THIS YOUNG COCK THE FIRST TIME I MET HIM...

KO... KOSARATSU?



DO NOT LISTEN TO
YOUR ANGER, SAMURAI!
IT IS NOT A GOOD
ADVISOR.



ANYWAY, YOU NOW BELONG TO SIRE
KISHIJI BANDO-NO-MINOWARA, AND
HE DOESN'T WANT TO WASTE THE
LIFE OF HIS SAMURAI'S ON TRIVIAL
VENGEANCES!

THEN, MAY THE GODS PUT ME
ON A BATTLEFIELD, FACING
MATSUMOTO, ONE DAY...

KOSARATSU DOESN'T KNOW HIS WISH WILL COME TRUE. SOON, LEADING SIRE BANDO'S ARMY, HE'LL CARRY DEATH ALL OVER HOKKAIDO. IT WILL BE "THE TORN UP SUMMER"!

THE END

